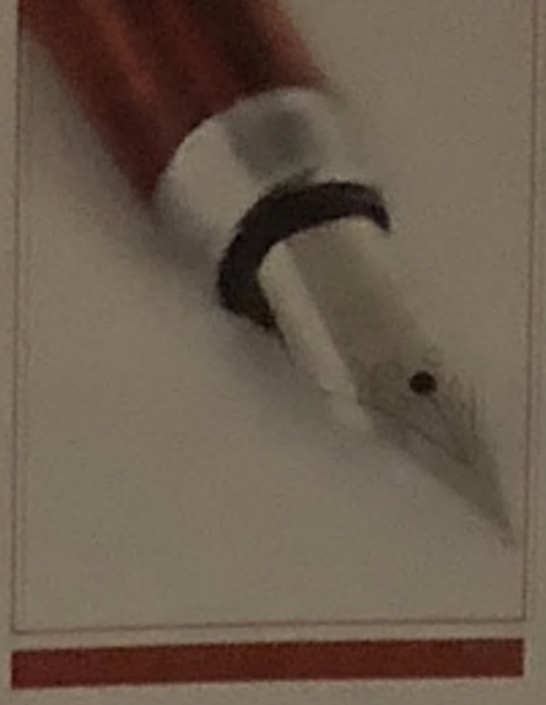
The Age of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs:

AL- Khulafa Ar-Rashidûn

Uthmân ibn Affan رضي الله عنه

The Third of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs

Maulvi Abdul Aziz
MA; D. Ed [London]



Publisher's Note

In the Name of Allah, the Lord of Grace, the Ever Merciful

For many years, I have been looking for textbooks on the History of Islam for English-speaking students, yet I have found very few. Most did not overcome a common problem: they did not go beyond the era of the Four Rightly-guided Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Bearing this in mind, we, at Darussalam, have resolved to present the entire History of Islam to our youth in language that appeals to them, in a simple yet lucid manner. The first four volumes in this series explore Islamic history during the period of the first Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs. Later volumes would be devoted to the

History of Islam, down through the ages to modern times, in sha' Allah.

Our past, present, and future are interconnected and interdependent. Therefore, knowing and understanding our history is not optional; it is essential.

This is the third volume from this series, which deals with the life of Uthman ibn Affan, the third of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs. Uthman ibn Affan was the most qualified to become the Caliph during his time; his claim to the caliphate was valid and his caliphate was legitimate. He led the people on the path of truth and ruled with justice, until he was martyred.

We would like to thank the author Maulvi Abdul Aziz, the editor and the designer Mr. Shahzad Ahmed for their diligent efforts in preparing this volume. We hope this work will inspire our youth to form a personal relationship with Uthman ibn Affan, and encourage them to commit their lives sincerely to his mission of serving justice even at the cost of their own lives, which he has left behind as our common heritage.

Abdul Malik Mujahid
Muharram 23, 1433
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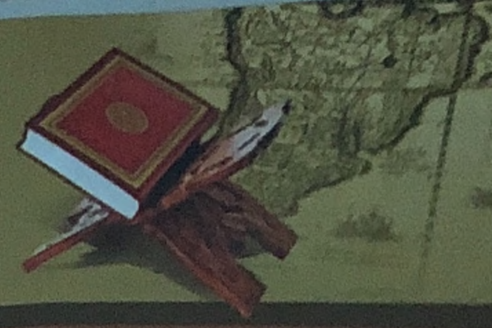

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Uthmân ibn Affan رضي الله عنه

The Third of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs

Chapter 1

Uthmân ibn Affan رضي الله عنه

The Third of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs

The six-man electoral council set up by Umar ibn Al-Khattab finally selected Uthmân ibn Affan as the third caliph.

The Early Life of Uthmân ibn Affan

Uthmân was born in At-Tâif in the year 576 CE, six years after the Year of the Elephant. He was about five years younger than the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. His lineage coincides with that of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in their common ancestor Abd Manaf. His mother was Arwa bint Kurayz. Arwa's mother was Umm Hakim, who was the full

sister of Abdullah, the father of the Prophet ﷺ. Uthmân's father was Affan, who died during the *Jahiliyyah* or the Period of Ignorance. Uthmân's mother became Muslim and died during the Caliphate of her son Uthmân, and he was among those who carried her to her grave.

Uthmân's *Kunyah* or nickname during the period of *Jahiliyyah* was Abu Amr. When Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ bore him a son, he named him Abdullah. So the Muslims called him by the *Kunyah* of Abu Abdullah. Uthmân belonged to the influential Bani Umayyah clan of the Quraysh tribe.

Makkah, At Ta'if road

Uthmân was known by the Honorific Title of

Dhu'n Nurayn

Uthmân was known by the title *Dhu'n Nurayn*: 'He of the Two Lights'. Why was Uthmân called *Dhu'n Nurayn*? This was because after becoming Muslim, he was first married to Ruqayyah, a daughter of the Prophet ﷺ, and upon her death, he married Umm Kulthum, another daughter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. For this distinction, he earned the honorific *Dhu'n Nurayn* 'He of the Two Lights'. It is significant to note that no one else was ever married to two daughters of a Prophet, from the time Allah created Adam until the arrival of the Hour, except Uthmân. When Umm Kulthum died, Allah's Messenger ﷺ used to say that he loved Uthmân so dearly that, if he had another daughter remaining, he would have married her to him.

His Physical

Appearance

He was neither short nor tall. He was soft-skinned, with a long thick beard, big-boned, broad-shouldered, with thick hair on his head. He had a hooked nose, fleshy calves and long arms covered with hair. He had a handsome face. His hair came down below his ears. He was elegant and neat in appearance.

Uthmân's

Family

Uthmân married eight wives in all, all of them after Islam. Two of them were the daughters of the Prophet ﷺ. He had nine sons from four wives. One of them was Abdullah, whose mother was Ruqayyah the daughter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He was born two years before the *Hijrah* or emigration. His mother took him

with her when she migrated with her husband Uthmân to Madinah. During his first days in Madinah, a rooster pecked him on the face. Ultimately, he died in 4 AH when he was six years old. Abân was also one of his nine sons. His mother was Umm Amr bint Jundub. He was a leading scholar of *Fiqh* or Islamic Jurisprudence. He was governor of Madinah for seven years during the Caliphate of Abdul Malik ibn Marwan. Abân narrated a number of *Ahâdith* or Traditions including the most popular *Hadith*, which he narrated from Uthmân:

> 'Whoever says at the beginning of each day and night: In the Name of Allah with whose Name nothing can cause harm on earth or in heaven, and He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing'; nothing will harm him that day or that night.'

This *Hadith* is recorded by At-Tirmidhi. Abân was regarded as one of the *Fuqaha* or jurists of his time. He died in 105 AH. Uthmân ibn Affan had seven daughters from five wives.

His Status

during *Jahiliyyah* or the pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance

During the *Jahiliyyah,* Uthmân was among the best of his people. He had a high status, was very wealthy and extremely modest. His people loved him dearly and respected him. He never prostrated to any idol during the period of *Jahiliyyah.* He never committed any immoral act. He did not drink alcohol before Islam. He used to say, "Alcohol destroys reason. The most sublime thing that Allah has given man is intellect or reason. Man should elevate himself by means of reason. He should not destroy it. "

He was well versed in the knowledge that was available to the Arabs during the period of *Jahiliyyah,* which included genealogy. Genealogy is the study of family history, which includes the study of the ancestors

of a particular person. Uthmân had good knowledge of proverbs. He knew the history of important events. He travelled to Syria and Abyssinia, mixed with the non-Arabs and learnt aspects of their lives and customs that no one else knew.

Uthmân came from a rich family engaged in trade and as he grew older, he himself became a successful businessman. He took care of the business that he inherited from his father, and his wealth grew. He was regarded as one of the men of Banu Umayyah who were held in high esteem by all of the Quraysh and among his own people, and he was loved dearly.

Uthmân's Acceptance of Islam

During the pre-Islamic days, Uthmân was a good friend of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq. Uthmân was thirty-four years old when Abu Bakr called him to Islam; he responded immediately and embraced Islam. Thus, he was one of the earliest Muslims. He accepted Islam after Abu Bakr, Ali, and Zayd ibn Harithah was Uthmân, making him the fourth man to accept Islam.

Uthmân's Marriage

to Ruqayyah, the Daughter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had given Ruqayyah in marriage to Utbah ibn Abi Lahab; and he had given her sister Umm Kulthum in marriage to Utaybah ibn Abi Lahab. However, when *Sûrah Al-Masad* [*Sûrah* 111 of the Glorious Qur'ân] was revealed, Abu Lahab and his wife Umm Jamil asked their sons to leave the daughters of the Prophet ﷺ, so they separated from them. It is significant to note that the marriage had not been consummated yet. Thus, it came as an honour to the Prophet ﷺ and his household but for the sons of Abu Lahab, it turned out to be a humiliation.

No sooner did Uthmân hear the news of the divorce of Ruqayyah than he was filled with joy and he hastened to propose marriage to her through the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ gave her in marriage to him. Uthmân was one of the most handsome men of Quraysh, and Ruqayyah competed with him in beauty and grace. It was said to her when she was presented to him: 'The best looking couple anyone has ever seen is Ruqayyah and her husband Uthmân.'

Umm Jamil and her husband Abu Lahab thought that by divorcing Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum they would deal a severe blow to the family of the Prophet ﷺ or at least weaken them. However, Allah chose what was better for Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum. The marriage caused a great deal of anger and frustration for Umm Jamil and Abu Lahab. They did not achieve anything. Thus, Allah sufficed the household of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ against their evil. And the Command of Allah is a decree determined.

His Persecution and **Emigration** to Abyssinia

The Companions of the Prophet ﷺ underwent severe trials and tribulations for embracing Islam. Even the prominent Muslims were not spared these trials. Uthmân was tortured and persecuted for the sake of Allah at the hands of his paternal uncle, Al-Hakam ibn Abi'l Aas ibn Umayyah. He caught Uthmân and tied him up, and said, 'Will you turn away from the religion of your forefathers for a new religion? I will not let you go until you give up this religion.' Uthmân said, 'By Allah! I will never give it up or leave it.' When Al-Hakam saw his steadfastness in adhering to his Faith, he let him go.'

The persecution intensified and affected all the Muslims. Yasir and his wife Sumayyah were killed. Allah's Messenger ﷺ was deeply grieved. He wondered where the Muslims could go. Then Allah's Messenger ﷺ thought of Abyssinia. Abyssinia is the old name for Ethiopia. The Prophet ﷺ pointed out that a religious king in whose land no one was wronged ruled Abyssinia.

The emigration began. The Prophet ﷺ felt very sad to see the group of believers leaving Makkah quietly. Among the emigrants during the first and the second migration to Abyssinia was Uthmân ibn Affan. His wife Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, accompanied him. They arrived in Abyssinia in the month of Rajab, in the fifth year after the Prophet's mission began. They found safety, security, and freedom to worship.

Uthmân benefited greatly from this emigration. He gained experience and learnt lessons that would stand him in good stead later in his life. He learnt that the steadfastness of the believers in the face of torture and persecution was a clear sign of their sincere Faith. Uthmân

learnt compassion towards the *Ummah* or community from the Prophet ﷺ. His compassion was displayed when he lived in Madinah during the time of the Prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr As-Siddiq and Umar ibn Al-Khattab, as well as when he became Caliph.

The Prophet ﷺ first suggested to the Muslims in Makkah to immigrate to Abyssinia, and in doing so, chose a safe place for his community and his message, so that it was protected from being wiped out. This is how the Prophet ﷺ trained the Muslim leaders to plan wisely and with farsightedness in order to protect the call to Islam and the callers. Thus, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ trained the Muslims to look for a safe land for the call and a centre from where they could spread the message of Islam.

Uthmân learnt from the Prophet's advice to migrate to Abyssinia that the household and the relatives of the leader should always remain prepared to take risks. They will have to remain in the forefront. Hence, when Uthmân became Caliph, his relatives were in the forefront of the army.

Uthmân was the first one of the *Ummah* (Muslim nation) to immigrate to Abyssinia with his family. Once, a rumour that the people of Makkah had become Muslims reached the emigrants in Abyssinia, so they decided to

Abyssinian landscapes.

return to Makkah. However, when they drew close to Makkah, they heard that the rumours about the people of Makkah were false. Nevertheless, some people entered the city under the protection of the people of Makkah. Among those who returned to Abyssinia were Uthmân ibn Affan and his wife Ruqayyah. He settled there until Allah granted permission to emigrate to Madinah.

Uthmân had a strong connection to the message of Islam from its beginning. He did not miss any event in the life of the Prophet ﷺ, public or private. Nor did he miss any event during the reigns of the first two rightly guided Caliphs. He did not miss anything, which had to do with the laying of foundations for the Islamic state.

Uthmân and the

Glorious Qur'ân

The method by which Uthmân ibn Affan and all the other Companions were educated and trained was the Glorious Qur'ân. The Glorious Qur'ân was the only source of guidance to be accepted. The Verses which Uthmân heard directly from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ played a significant role in the formation of his Islamic

personality. They purified his heart and soul. He became a new man, with new values, emotions, aims, behaviour, and aspirations.

Uthmân was deeply attached to the Qur'ân, loved to live by the Book of Allah and took his time while learning it. When he learnt ten Verses from the Prophet ﷺ, he would not go beyond them until he had learnt the knowledge contained in them, as well as how to apply it in deeds. Thus, he learnt the Qur'ân, knowledge and its application together. Uthmân himself has narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'The best of you are those who learn the Qur'ân and teach it.'

Uthmân recited the whole Qur'ân back to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ before he died. Uthmân used to say, 'Three worldly things have been made dear to me: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and reading the Qur'ân.'

Uthmân was *Hâfith* of the Qur'ân, one who has memorized the entire Qur'ân. He read the Qur'ân almost all the time. When Uthmân died, his copy of the Qur'ân was worn out because he had read from it so much. Uthmân's view of Allah, life, the universe, Paradise, Hell, the Divine Will and Decree, the true nature of man and man's struggle against Satan were all based on the Noble Qur'ân and the guidance of the Prophet ﷺ.

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He Remained Close to the Prophet in Madinah

Uthmân stayed close to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Makkah after he became a Muslim. He also remained close to the Prophet ﷺ in Madinah after he migrated there. Uthmân devoted himself to studying various branches of knowledge at the hands of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who had been taught by his Lord in the best manner. Uthmân immersed himself into the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ. He remained close to him during times of war and peace. Uthmân was one of the pillars of the Islamic State. He did not withhold any advice, opinion or wealth. He was also present at every major event except the Battle of Badr.

Activity

ACTIVITY

1. Uthmân ibn Affan was the _____ Caliph.
2. Uthmân was born _____ years after the Year of the Elephant.
3. He was the _____ man to accept Islam.
4. According to a *Hadith* narrated by Uthmân, the three things most dear to him were _____, _____, and _____.
5. Uthmân was one of the _____ of the Islamic State.

1. What is the meaning of the Arabic term '*Dhu'n Nurayn*'? Why was Uthmân known by this honorific title?
2. How was Abu Lahab's plan foiled when he caused the divorce of Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum?
3. What lessons did Uthmân learn from the Prophet ﷺ during his migration to Abyssinia [Ethiopia]?
4. What helped shape the personality of Uthmân?

Uthmân and The Battle of Badr

Chapter 2

Uthmân and the
Battle of Badr

When the Muslims went out to fight the Battle of Badr, Uthmân's wife, Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was sick with measles. She was confined to her bed when Allah's Messenger ﷺ called on the Muslims to intercept the trade caravan of the Quraysh. Allah's Messenger ﷺ commanded Uthmân to remain with Ruqayyah and nurse her. However, her sickness worsened and she died. She longed to see her father who had gone out at Badr. She also desired to see her sister Zaynab who was still in Makkah. Ruqayyah was buried in the graveyard of Al-Baqi.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ returned from Badr, he learnt of her death. He went out to Al-Baqi and stood over the grave of his daughter. He prayed for her forgiveness. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said to Uthmân, 'You will have the reward and share of a man who was present at Badr.'

UTHMĀN IBN AFFAN

Uthmân and The Battle of Badr

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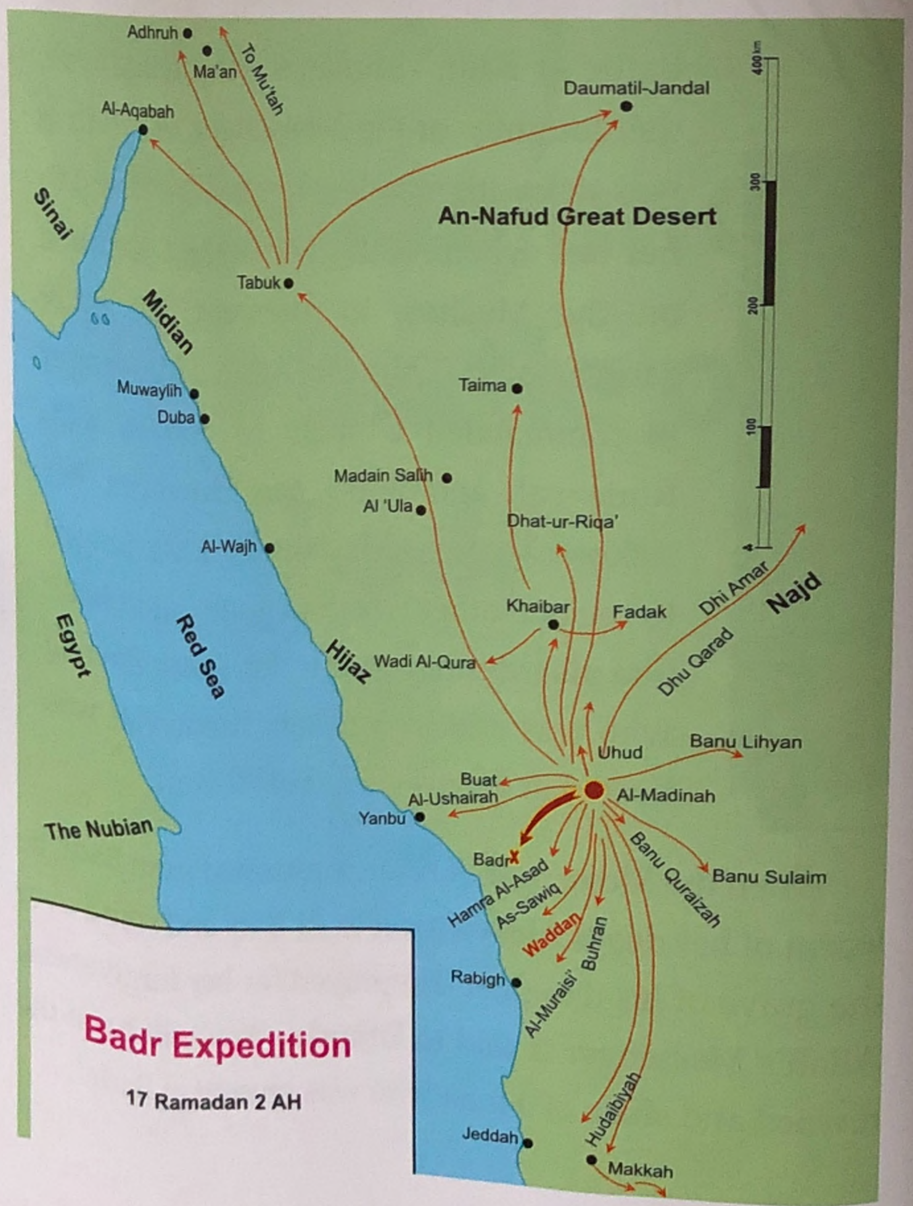
Thus, Uthmân could not participate in the Battle of Badr because of the sickness of his wife Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Nevertheless, whoever was given a share of the booty of Badr by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was regarded as having been there. So Uthmân was regarded as one of the people of Badr.

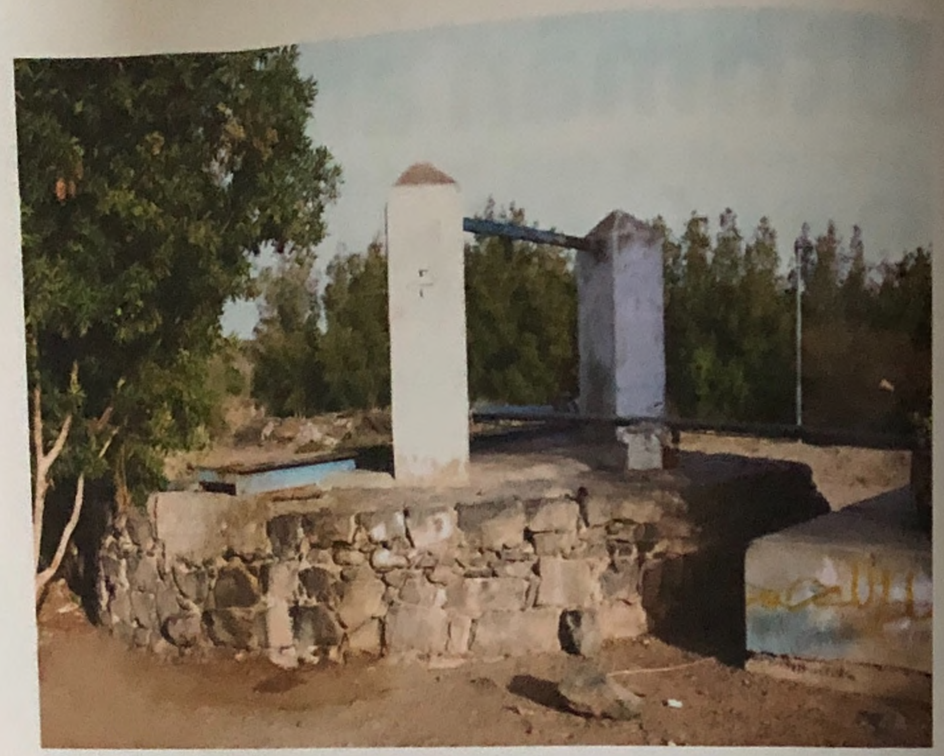


Uthmân and *Bay'at Ar-Ridwan*

[the Pledge of Goodly Acceptance] or *Bay'at ash-Shajarah* [the Pledge of the Tree]

In 628 CE, towards the end of the sixth year of the *Hijrah* or emigration, Allah's Messenger accompanied by nearly 1400 Companions decided to perform the minor Pilgrimage or *Umrah* to Makkah. For nearly six years, there had been a virtually permanent state of war between the Muslim community and the pagans of Makkah. However, the Prophet ﷺ did not anticipate any conflict on that occasion because he intended to reach Makkah in Dhu'l Qa'dah. It was one of the four 'sacred months' during which all warfare was outlawed, particularly so in and around the Holy City. The Prophet's party set out from Madinah, consisting of 1400 Companions dressed in the pilgrim's garb [*Ihrâm*].

On learning of the Prophet's approach, the Makkans



Bir 'Usfan,

decided, against all Arabian tradition, to oppose the entry of the pilgrims by force. A detachment of two hundred horsemen under the command of Khalid ibn al-Walid was sent out to stop the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. Several thousand heavily armed men also took up positions around Makkah. Allah's Messenger ﷺ had not come to Makkah to engage in battle. He merely wanted to perform *Umrah* and then return westwards from Bir 'Usfan, a place about one day's journey from Makkah. He alighted on the plain of Hudaybiyyah and remained there for the next few days.

Negotiations and talks were opened between the Muslims and the Makkan chiefs. After some opening

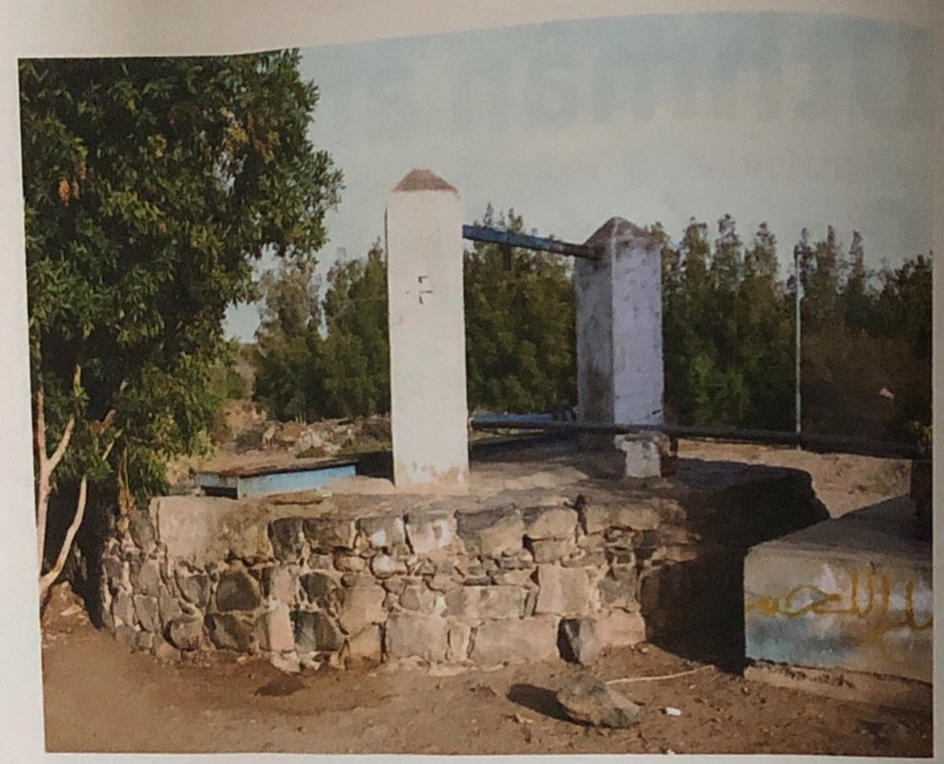
discussions conducted by various emissaries of both parties, the Prophet ﷺ finally decided to send Uthmân ibn Affan as his envoy since he belonged to one of the most influential Makkan clans. Allah's Messenger ﷺ called Uthmân and said, 'Go to the Quraysh and tell them that we have not come to fight. Rather, we have come only as visitors to this House. We respect its sanctity. We have our sacrificial animals with us, which we will slaughter and leave.'

Uthmân set out and arrived at Baldah, a place near Makkah, where he found the Quraysh. He said, 'The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has sent me to you, to call you to Allah and Islam.' They said, 'We have heard what you say, but it will never happen.' Uthmân was well received by them, but the Makkans repeated to him their refusal to allow any of those now in Hudaybiyyah to approach the Ka'bah.

They invited Uthmân personally to circumambulate the Ka'bah [i.e., perform the *Tawaf*], which he refused. He said, 'I will not make my rounds of the House until the Messenger of Allah ﷺ makes his.'

It so happened that shortly after Uthmân's arrival in Makkah, a rumour reached the Muslim camp at Hudaybiyyah that he had been murdered. Thereupon, the

Uthmân and Bay'at ar-Ridwan



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decided, against all Arabian tradition, to oppose the entry of the pilgrims by force. A detachment of two hundred horsemen under the command of Khalid ibn al-Walid was sent out to stop the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. Several thousand heavily armed men also took up positions around Makkah. Allah's Messenger ﷺ had not come to Makkah to engage in battle. He merely wanted to perform *Umrah* and then return westwards from Bir 'Usfan, a place about one day's journey from Makkah. He alighted on the plain of Hudaybiyyah and remained there for the next few days.

Negotiations and talks were opened between the Muslims and the Makkan chiefs. After some opening

discussions conducted by various emissaries of both parties, the Prophet ﷺ finally decided to send Uthmân ibn Affan as his envoy since he belonged to one of the most influential Makkan clans. Allah's Messenger ﷺ called Uthmân and said, 'Go to the Quraysh and tell them that we have not come to fight. Rather, we have come only as visitors to this House. We respect its sanctity. We have our sacrificial animals with us, which we will slaughter and leave.'

Uthmân set out and arrived at Baldah, a place near Makkah, where he found the Quraysh. He said, 'The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has sent me to you, to call you to Allah and Islam.' They said, 'We have heard what you say, but it will never happen.' Uthmân was well received by them, but the Makkans repeated to him their refusal to allow any of those now in Hudaybiyyah to approach the Ka'bah.

They invited Uthmân personally to circumambulate the Ka'bah [i.e., perform the *Tawaf*], which he refused. He said, 'I will not make my rounds of the House until the Messenger of Allah ﷺ makes his.'

It so happened that shortly after Uthmân's arrival in Makkah, a rumour reached the Muslim camp at Hudaybiyyah that he had been murdered. Thereupon, the

Prophet ﷺ, expecting a treacherous attack by the Makkans, assembled the Companions. Allah's Messenger ﷺ seated himself beneath an acacia tree that was green with spring foliage breaking into leaf. One by one, the Companions came and pledged allegiance to him. The first man to reach the Prophet ﷺ was a Companion called Abu Sinan.

Amid scenes of greatest enthusiasm, Allah's Messenger ﷺ took a pledge from each one of his Companions that they would remain steadfast and fight the unbelievers or *Mushrikîn* unto death. After the pledge of Abu Sinan, the rest of the Companions came forth and made the pledge. Salamah ibn Al-Akwa swore allegiance three times:

with the first group of people in the middle and with the last group. All the Companions responded, swearing loyalty unto death except for Al-Jadd ibn Qays. He was a hypocrite. He tried to hide behind his camel but was seen nonetheless.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ then said, 'I pledge the allegiance of Uthmân,' whereupon he put out his left hand, as the hand of his son-in-law Uthmân, and grasping it with his right hand, pledged the pact. After the revelation of Verse 18 of *Sûrah Al-Fath* [*Sûrah* 48 of the Qur'ân], this 'Pledge of the Tree' became known to history as *Bay'at Ar-Ridwan*: 'the Pledge of [Allah's] Goodly Acceptance' or 'the Pledge of Good Pleasure'.

The number of Companions from whom the Prophet ﷺ accepted the oath of allegiance beneath the tree was 1400 (one thousand four hundred). The Qur'ân speaks of the people who gave the oath of allegiance, for example in *Sûrah Al-Fath* 48:10. Their virtue is mentioned in many Qur'ânic verses and *Ahâdith*. The Prophet ﷺ is reported as having said on the Day of Hudaybiyyah: 'You are the best people on earth.' It is significant to note that the Prophet ﷺ himself swore allegiance on behalf of Uthmân ibn Affan.

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Uthmân's Contribution of his Wealth at the Time of **Tabûk Expedition**

In 9 AH, the Roman Emperor Heraclius turned his attention towards Arabia. He wanted to attack it and absorb it into his empire. When Allah's Messenger ﷺ came to know about it, he commanded his Companions to prepare for fighting in the way of Allah.

It was a blazing hot summer and the country was suffering famine and hardship. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ urged the Companions to contribute in cash and kind. Each one gave what he could. Women brought their jewellery to the Prophet ﷺ and he used it to help prepare the army.

When Uthmân heard the call of the Prophet ﷺ, he supplied the army with all its requirements -- down to the last rope and rein. Uthmân supplied the army of Tabûk with nine hundred and forty camels and sixty horses to bring the number to one thousand. Uthmân also brought ten thousand *Dinars* to equip the army and placed the money before Allah's Messenger ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ started turning the coins over with his hand and said, 'Nothing can harm Uthmân, no matter what he does after this.'

The Well of Rûmah

The Well of Rûmah

Uthmân came from a rich family engaged in trade. As he grew older, he himself became a successful businessman. He was a kind and generous person who was always the first to do good deeds and spend on worthy causes. He used his wealth in obedience to Allah, seeking His Pleasure.

When the Prophet ﷺ came to Madinah, he found that there was very little fresh water there. There was no source of fresh water except for the well of Rûmah. It belonged

to a man of Banu Ghifar. Its water was far better than that of Madinah, and the owner used to sell it at a heavy price. When the Prophet ﷺ requested him to give the spring as a gift to the Muslim community, he refused. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'Whoever digs the well of Rûmah, his shall be Paradise.' Thereupon, Uthmân bought it for 3,500 *Dinars* and made it an endowment for the whole community.

Allah's Messenger is reported to have also said, 'Whoever outfits the 'Army of Difficulty' his shall be Paradise.' And Uthmân outfitted it. *Jaysh Al-Usrah*, the *Ghazwat Al-Usrah* or the Campaign of Difficulty was a name given to the campaign of Tabûk on account of the extremely difficult circumstances under which it took place. We have mentioned it above briefly.

Well of Rome, which Uthman bought for Muslims

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UTHMĀN IBN AFFAN

Expansion of the Prophet's Mosque and Uthmân's Generosity

After the Prophet ﷺ built his mosque in Madinah the Muslims would gather there to offer the five daily Prayers. They used to collect there to listen to the sermons and speeches of the Prophet ﷺ in which he would issue commands and prohibitions. They learnt about their religion in the mosque. They would set out for their Campaigns from the mosque. They would return to it

when they came back. Hence, the mosque became too small to accommodate the people.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ asked some of his Companions to buy the land next to the mosque so that the mosque could be made big enough to accommodate all the people. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'Who will buy the land of so and so and add it to the mosque in return for something good for him in Paradise?'

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The Modesty of Uthmân

Uthmân was the most modest of all Companions and modesty was his chief quality. The Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said,

'The most merciful of my *Ummah* is Abu Bakr, the strictest in adherence to religion is Umar, the most sincere in modesty is Uthmân, the most knowledgeable about the lawful (*Halal*) and unlawful (*Haram*) is Mu'adh ibn Jabal, the most knowledgeable about the Book of Allah is Ubayy, the most knowledgeable about inheritance is Zayd ibn Thabit. Every nation has a keeper of secrets, and the keeper of secrets of this nation is Abu Ubaydah ibn Al-Jarrah.'

Uthmân during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr and Umar

Uthmân was one of those Companions whose opinion was sought during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr, who held his opinion in high esteem.

Once during the time of Abu Bakr, there was a drought, when there was little or no rain. It was not long before the workmen of Uthmân came from Syria bringing him one hundred camels laden with various kinds of foodstuff. The people gathered at Uthmân's house and knocked at the door, whereupon Uthmân came out to them. They said, 'It has not rained. The earth is not bringing forth its produce. People are suffering great hardship, so sell your food to us so that we may give it to the poor people.' They offered him a very good price. Uthmân said, 'I have a better offer.' The merchant argued, 'There are no merchants in Madinah other than us. Who has given you a better offer?'

Uthmân answered, 'Allah has given me a better offer: tenfold for every *Dirham*. Can you give me more?' Uthmân then gave away all the food as charity to the Muslims. Will those who virtually worship money and those who hoard the people's food out of greed pay heed to these great words of Uthmân? Will these words reach their hearts? Will they be kind and merciful to the poor and needy, widows, and orphans who are in distress and stand in dire need of food?'

This is an example of the kindness and generosity of Uthmân. He was one of the most merciful of people towards others.

At the Time of Umar

Umar held Uthmân in high esteem. When the people wanted to ask Umar about something, they would approach him through Uthmân and Abdur Rahman ibn Awf. During the caliphate of Umar ibn Al-Khattab, the status of Uthmân was that of an adviser.

The Islamic Calendar

Some reports narrate that Uthmân the one who suggested to Umar that he should start the *Hijri* year with Muharram. After consultation, it was agreed that the Islamic year should start with the Prophet's emigration or *Hijrah*.

This was because the *Hijrah* was the dividing point between truth and falsehood. However, opinions were divided as to which month should be regarded as the beginning of the year. Uthmân pointed out: 'Date the beginning of the year from Muharram because it is a sacred month. Moreover, it is the first of the months in counting and it is when the people return from *Hajj*.' Umar and those present with him approved of Uthmân's opinion and the matter was settled. The starting point of the Islamic calendar was decided once and for all.

Activity

1. The Prophet ﷺ did not anticipate any conflict during the minor pilgrimage, because _____.
2. The people urgently gave allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ because _____.
3. Uthmân was well known for being sincere in _____.
4. During the caliphate of Umar, Uthmân's status was that of an _____.
5. Uthmân's contribution towards the Islamic calendar was that he suggested it start from the month of _____.

Activity

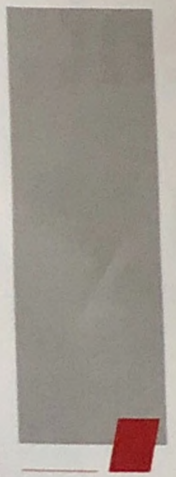
1. Why was Uthmân unable to participate in the Battle of Badr?
2. Why did Allah's Messenger send Uthmân as his envoy during Hudaybiyyah?
3. Allah's Messenger ﷺ swore allegiance on behalf of Uthmân. What does this say about the status of Uthmân in the eyes of the Prophet ﷺ?
4. Mention the different ways in which Uthmân served Islam with his wealth.

Uthmân's Appointment as Caliph

Chapter 3

Uthmân's Appointment as Caliph

Umar ibn Al-Khattab remained concerned about the unity and future of the Muslim nation. Even during the last critical moments of his life, he managed to devise a new and unprecedented way of choosing a new Caliph. Allah's Messenger had passed away before him without appointing a successor. When Abu Bakr as-Siddiq passed away, he appointed Umar after consulting the senior Companions.



However, as we have hinted earlier, he decided on a different method that suited the situation. The method of selecting the new Caliph was based on limiting the electoral council or *Shûra* to a specific number of people. Umar chose six of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, all of whom were fit to become a Caliph, namely Talhah, Az-Zubayr, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, Uthmân, Ali and Abdur Rahman ibn Awf.

Umar also made it quite clear how the selection was to be made and how long it should take. He ordered some troops to keep a watch over the proceedings. Umar had taken every care to keep away his relatives from positions of authority, even though there were among them those who were qualified for it. For instance, his son Abdullah ibn Umar was to be present among them as an adviser only. He commanded the members of the electoral council to meet together in the house of one of them and consult one another. Umar appointed Suhayb Ar-Rûmi to lead the Prayers during the period of consultation. He did not appoint any of the six to lead the Prayers, lest that be taken as a nomination for Caliphate. Being an Imâm or being asked to lead the Prayers is an important position in Islam. An Imâm is not only a leader of Prayers, but he is also a leader of the community.

Umar told them, 'If three men approve of one man and three another, then refer to Abdullah ibn Umar. Whichever of the two groups he favours let them choose a man from among themselves. If they do not approve of the ruling of Abdullah ibn Umar, then go with the group that has Abdur Rahman ibn Awf. He described Abdur Rahman as being a wise and mature man. He said, 'What a wise man Abdur Rahman ibn Awf is and how mature! He is guided and protected by Allah.'

How Abdur Rahman ibn Awf Conducted the Council Process

Barely had the people finished burying Umar, when the electors appointed by him held a meeting. Abdur Rahman and other members of the council consulted most of the people of Madinah and those Muslims who had come to Madinah for pilgrimage. In general, it was found that most people favoured either Ali or Uthmân to succeed Umar. However, Abdur Rahman decided that Uthmân should succeed because of his age and experience. Uthmân was more than twenty-five years older than Ali. Hence, Abdur Rahman swore his allegiance in favour of Uthmân, and nobody protested against his decision. Ali ibn Abi Talib was the first one to swear allegiance after Abdur Rahman ibn Awf. Thus, the Caliphate of Uthmân came about as a result of the undivided consensus of the Companions.

Agreement to Swear Allegiance to Uthmân

The *Fajr* Prayer on the day of swearing allegiance was led by Suhayb ar-Rûmi. It was the last day of the month

of Dhul Hijjah in the year 23 AH/ 6 November, 644 CE. After the prayer, Abdur Rahman ibn Awf appeared, wearing the head-cover that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had put on his head. The men of the electoral council had gathered by the pulpit. He sent for those of the Emigrants, Helpers [*Al-Ansâr*] and army commanders who were present. Among them were Mu'âwiyah, the governor of Syria, Umayr ibn Sa'd, the governor of Syria, Hims, and Amr ibn Al-Âs, the governor of Egypt. They had gone for *Hajj* with Umar and had come with him to Madinah. Abdur Rahman declared his allegiance to Uthmân and the people swore allegiance to him: the Emigrants, the Helpers, the commanders of the army and the Muslims.

Uthmân was the Most Qualified to Become the Caliph

Uthmân was the most qualified to become the Caliph. No one disagreed with his appointment as Caliph, and thus, his claim to the Caliphate was valid. When Umar died, all the Muslims swore allegiance to Uthmân ibn Affan. He led the people on the path of the truth and ruled with justice, until he was martyred.

Uthmân ibn Affan as Caliph

Uthmân continued the same principles and policies that were adopted by Umar. As we know that in the first letter written by Uthmân to all his governors, he clearly outlined the policies of his government. In the beginning, he also avoided making changes among high officials in the government. As a result, the Islamic State continued to grow. He made it clear to the governors that their mission was not to collect wealth. Rather, their duty was to take care of the interests of the people. He commanded his officials that they should take from people what was due; and give them what was due to them. In his first letter to the governors, Uthmân focused on the values of political and economic justice.

The Highest Authority in the State

Uthmân declared that the highest authority in the State was the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger and the example of the first two rightly guided Caliphs, Abu Bakr As-Siddiq and Umar ibn Al-Khattab.

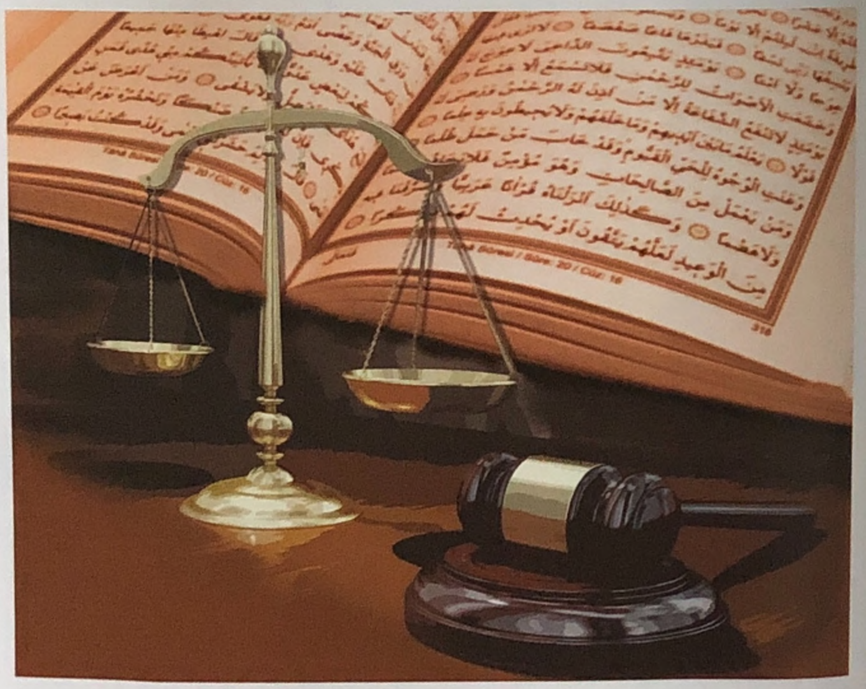
Shūra or the Consultative Council

Uthman established an Advisory Council for his State. It was composed of the Senior Companions of the Messenger of Allah; the Emigrants and the Helpers. Uthmân issued a request to the governors and army commanders, saying: 'Continue as you were working for Umar; and do not change. Whatever decision you want to take, refer it to us. We will gather the community for consultation and then we will give you an answer.'

His commanders always abided by Uthmân's commands. If they wanted to launch a campaign or make any advances in the conquests, they would consult him and ask for his permission. Once, Abdullah ibn Abi Sarh wrote to the Caliph Uthmân asking him for permission to penetrate deeper into Africa, because the islands belonging to the Romans were close to the Muslims. The Caliph Uthmân gave him permission after consulting others; and he urged the people to join him. When Mu'awiyah ibn

Abi Sufyan wanted to conquer the islands of Cyprus and Rhodes, he did the same thing. Uthmân held the meeting of the Advisory Council or *Shûra* and discussed the matter. Then he gave the permission.

Uthmân consulted the senior Companions on the issue of the compilation of the Qur'ân. Likewise, the commanders of the Caliph Uthmân also used to consult each other with regard to directing battles.



Justice and Equality

One of the aims of Islamic rule is to lay the foundations of the Islamic system, which would establish a Muslim society. Among the most important of these foundations

are justice and equality. Uthmân wrote to the people in the regions, saying, 'Enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil. No believer should subject himself to humiliation, for I will be with the weak against the strong, so long as he has been wronged.'

His policy was based on justice in its most magnificent form. It is narrated that one day Uthmân got angry with his servant and twisted his ear until he hurt him. Uthmân could not sleep that night, until after he called the servant to his room and asked him to take revenge by twisting his ear. The servant refused to obey at first, but Uthmân insisted until the servant finally obeyed.

Freedom:

Guaranteed to all People

At the time of the rightly guided Caliphs, civil freedoms (such as we know today) were guaranteed and protected, such as religious freedom, freedom of movement, the right to safety, the safety of one's home, freedom of ownership and freedom of opinion.

Conquests

at the Time of Uthmân ibn Affan: Conquests on the Egyptian Front

News of the murder of Umar ibn al-Khattab encouraged the enemies of Islam to attempt to recapture their lost lands. The Persians and the Romans hoped that they would be able to take back their lands and regain their power.

The Roman leaders had left Syria after their defeat and had moved to Constantinople [the old name for Istanbul]. At the time of Uthmân, they began to look for means that would enable them to take back their land. They assembled in Alexandria and sought the help of the Roman navy. They began to provoke the Romans to rebel against the Muslim authority. They got the support of the local population. Therefore, they wrote to the emperor Constantine, who was the son of Heraclius. They informed him of the small number of

the Muslims and described to him how the Romans living in Alexandria felt degraded. Constantine ordered Manuel Al-Khassi, the commander of the royal forces, to march towards Alexandria and recapture it from the Muslims.

He was accompanied by a large force carried on three hundred ships. The ships were loaded with all the equipment and weapons they would need. As a result, a large-scale rebellion took place in Alexandria. The Roman army took possession of the city after a fight with the Muslims. Manuel and his troops ransacked Alexandria and left it in ruins. They went on to spread corruption in the surrounding towns. When Uthmân ibn Affan came to know about the situation in Alexandria, he commanded Amr ibn Al-Âs to crush the rebellion and beat back the Roman attack. Amr was experienced in fighting them and the Romans feared him.

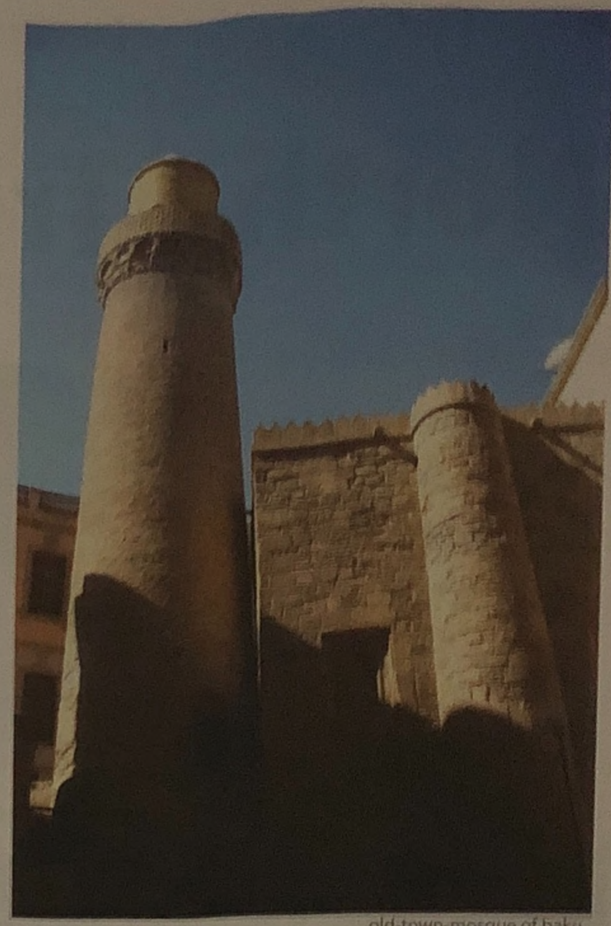
Amr ibn Al-Âs invaded the region and drove the Romans out. He recovered the port city of Alexandria. This took place in 25 AH/ 645 CE.

Rebellion of

Azerbaijan and Armenia

Azerbaijan and Armenia were conquered during the time of Umar ibn Al-Khattab. A rebellion took place against the Islamic state after his death and Uthmân ibn Affan commanded Walid ibn Uqbah to crush the rebellion. Walid ibn Uqbah was the governor

of Kufa at that time. Uqbah sent troops to Azerbaijan and himself set out with some people a little later. The people of Azerbaijan hastened to come out to him, seeking a peace treaty. Walid then sent dispatches to the surrounding regions and launched attacks. This occurred in the year 26 AH/ 646 CE. Things settled down in the region after most of the people embraced Islam and learnt the Glorious Qur'ân.


old-town-mosque of baku

During the same period, Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan sent an army to Armenia to face the Romans. The Muslim army was under the command of Habib ibn Maslamah. The Muslim troops conquered the entire region of Armenia after defeating the Roman Forces. Thus, by the end of 26 AH, the territory up to Caucasus Mountains [in Central Asia] came under the sway of Islam.

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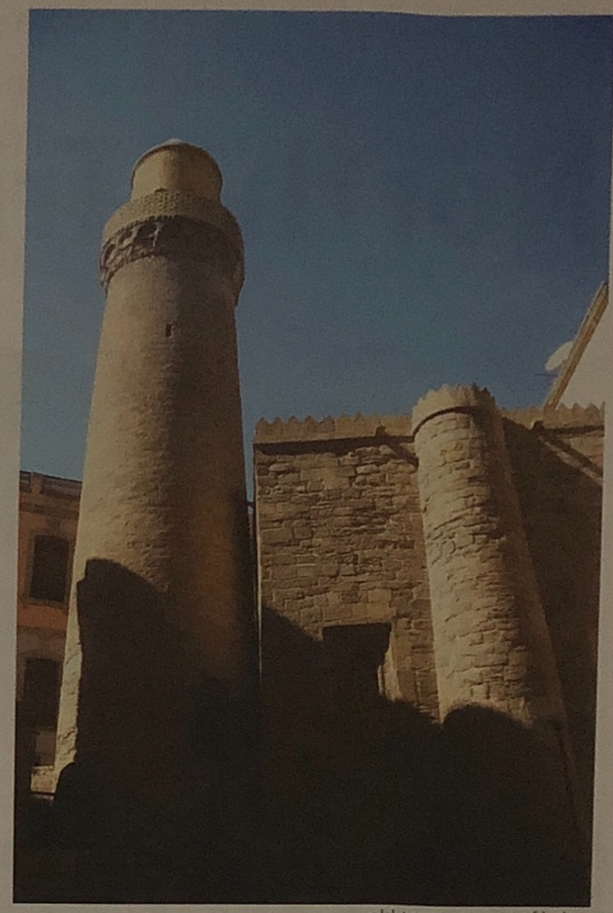

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The Conquest of North Africa

It was necessary to drive away the Romans from North Africa for the defence of Egypt.

Tripoli [the present capital of Libya] was a stronghold of the Romans. When Abdullah ibn Sa'd ibn Abil Sarh, the governor of Egypt, asked the Caliph Uthmân ibn Affan for permission to attack North Africa, he gave him the permission after consulting the Companions.

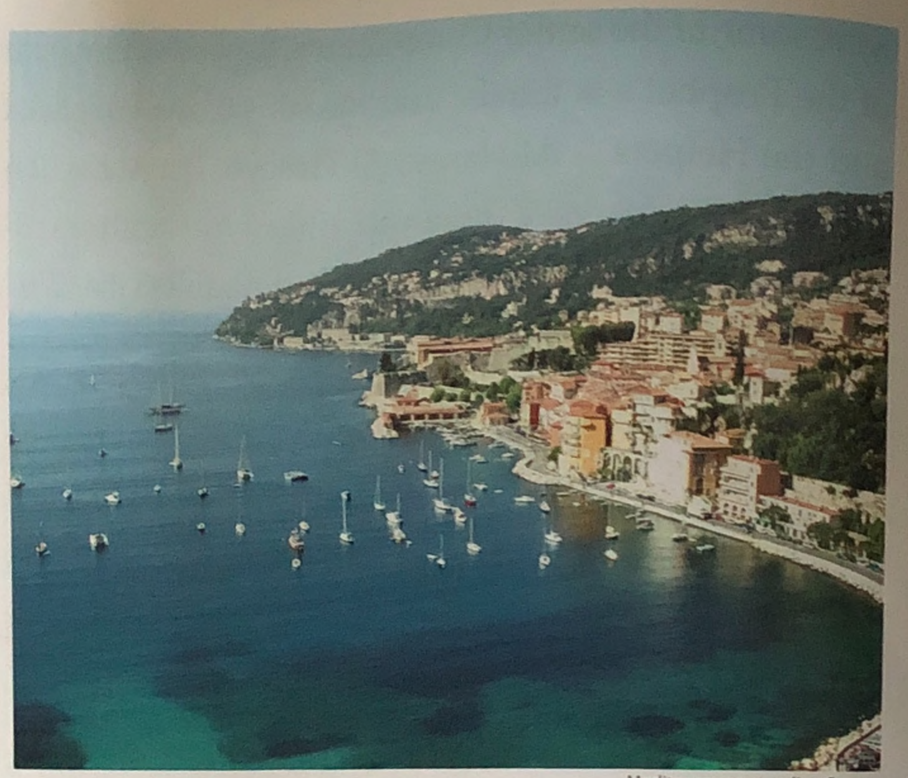
Uthmân called people to fight in the way of Allah. He gathered and equipped the fighters and sent them to Egypt to invade North Africa under the leadership of Abdullah ibn Sa'd. Among those who went out to fight

were some of the senior Companions, the best of the youth of the Prophet's ﷺ family, and the sons of the Emigrants and the Helpers -- Al-Hasan, Al-Husayn, Ibn Abbas, Ibn Ja'far among others. Uthmân appointed Al-Harith ibn Al-Hakam to lead them until they joined Abdullah ibn Sa'd.

Uthmân helped this campaign by supplying one thousand camels to carry the poor among the people. When the army reached Egypt, it joined the army of Abdullah ibn Sa'd and the united army of twenty thousand men proceeded from Egypt under the command of Abdullah, toward North Africa.

The Romans were dealt a decisive blow in North Africa. Their coastlines were exposed to danger after the Muslim

Ancient Roman ruins of Tripoli



Mediterranean coastline Cyprus

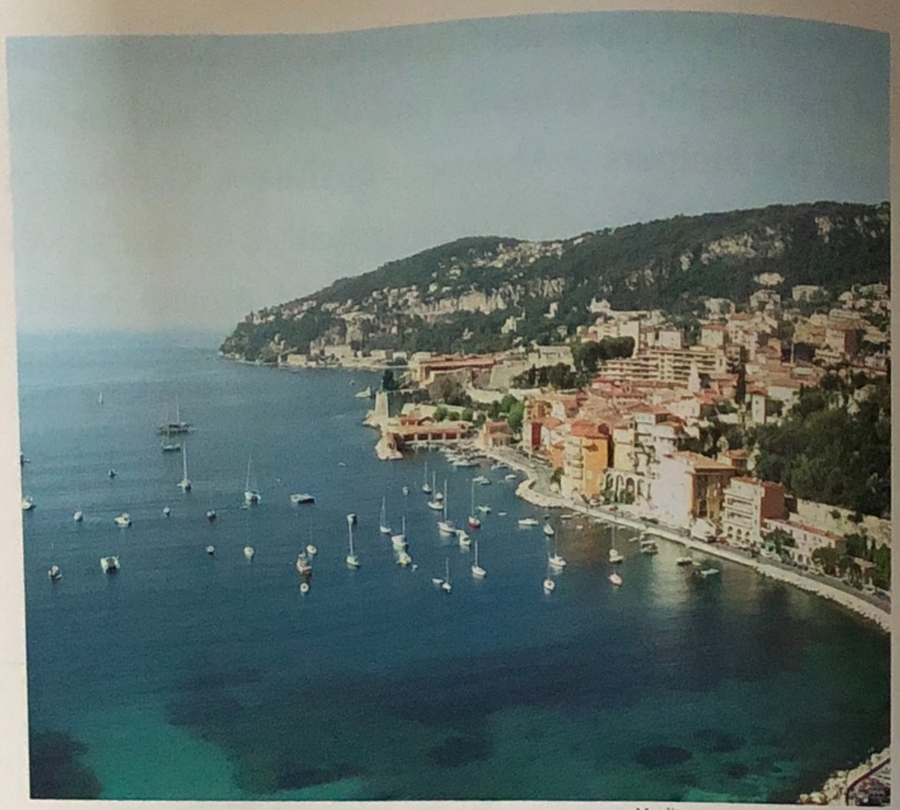
navy gained control of the Mediterranean coastline.

One specific achievement of the rule of Uthmân was the establishment of a navy. It was a major development in Islamic history. It made Muslims stronger in defending their vast coastlines. It helped facilitate the conquests of Crete and Cyprus. The first fleet equipped against Cyprus, in the year 28 AH [648 CE] was commanded by Abdullah ibn Qays Al-Jâsi as admiral. Cyprus was taken easily. Abdullah ibn Qays led fifty expeditions by sea, some in winter and some in summer, and no one drowned or suffered any mishap. He used to pray to Allah to keep him and his troops safe. If he wanted to take a risk by himself,

he would go on his own boat as a scout. Once he went to one of the ports in the Roman territory. There he found beggars seeking alms from everyone and he gave charity to them. One of the beggar women went back to her village and informed the men about the arrival of Abdullah ibn Qays. They rushed to him and attacked him. He fought back, but he was killed. Abdullah ibn Qays was the only one to be killed, the sailor who was with him escaped and returned to his companions.

A Glance at the Conquests during the Rule of Uthmân

Thus, we see that the Islamic conquests continued during the reign of Uthmân. They brought under control Tabaristan, Nasa, Sarkhas, Marw, Kirmân, Nishapur, and Herât [now in Afghanistan]. In this way, the Muslims ruled over a vast part of Asia and Africa, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Persia, or Iran, Iraq, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Palestine, Jordon, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Arabia, and Yemen, including the Gulf Countries. The Islamic state was far bigger than any of the mighty Roman or Persian empires of the past.



Mediterranean coastline Cyprus

navy gained control of the Mediterranean coastline.

One specific achievement of the rule of Uthmân was the establishment of a navy. It was a major development in Islamic history. It made Muslims stronger in defending their vast coastlines. It helped facilitate the conquests of Crete and Cyprus. The first fleet equipped against Cyprus, in the year 28 AH [648 CE] was commanded by Abdullah ibn Qays Al-Jâsi as admiral. Cyprus was taken easily. Abdullah ibn Qays led fifty expeditions by sea, some in winter and some in summer, and no one drowned or suffered any mishap. He used to pray to Allah to keep him and his troops safe. If he wanted to take a risk by himself,

he would go on his own boat as a scout. Once he went to one of the ports in the Roman territory. There he found beggars seeking alms from everyone and he gave charity to them. One of the beggar women went back to her village and informed the men about the arrival of Abdullah ibn Qays. They rushed to him and attacked him. He fought back, but he was killed. Abdullah ibn Qays was the only one to be killed, the sailor who was with him escaped and returned to his companions.

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Activity

1. Uthmân ruled with _____ until he was martyred.
2. The Advisory Council that Uthmân established was composed of _____.
3. Among the most important foundations of the Islamic system are _____ and _____.
4. The people of Azerbaijan hastened to come out seeking a _____.

1. Why did Abdur Rahman ibn Awf decide that Uthmân should be the new Caliph?
2. What did Uthmân focus on in his first letter to the governors?
3. Mention the highest authority by which Uthmân ruled.
4. How did Uthmân recover Alexandria?
5. How was the establishment of a navy during Uthmân's time a major development?

1. Everyone paid allegiance to Uthmân and no one objected. _____
2. The governors went ahead with conquests without consulting Uthmân. _____
3. The navy helped in the conquests of Crete and Cyprus. _____

Types of Public **Expenditures** at the Time of Uthmân ibn Affan

Chapter 4

The Salary of the Caliph

Uthmân did not take anything from the Public Treasury or *Bayt al-Mâl*. He was the richest of the Quraysh and was involved in trade. He used to spend on his family and those around him from his own wealth.

Salaries of Governors from the Public Treasury

At the time of Uthmân, the Islamic state was divided into provinces. Each province was administered by a governor appointed by the Caliph. The governors took their salaries from the public treasury and ran the affairs of the province according to the rulings of Islamic *Shari'ah* or law. It was part of the governor's duty to supervise the collection of the income of the provinces. This income consisted of protection tax [*Jizyah*], land tax [*Kharaj*], and one-tenth on trade goods. The governors spent from that income on provincial affairs. Anything that was left was to be sent to the public treasury of the Muslims at Madinah. As for the

Zakât or purifying dues, which was received from the wealthy in the province, it was spent on the poor in the same region. The public treasury also paid salaries to the troops in addition to whatever share of the booty they got. The troops of each province got the salaries from the provincial public treasury.

Financing the Rebuilding of the Prophet's Mosque

The people asked Uthmân to expand the Prophet's Mosque. This was because it used to become too crowded at *Jumuah* Prayers, due to the spread of conquests and the great increase in the number of inhabitants in Madinah. Uthmân consulted the wise people who agreed to demolish the mosque and then rebuild it. Soon the mosque was demolished and rebuilding and expanding it began. Uthmân himself remained present at the site.

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Financing the Expansion of *Al-Masjid Al-Haram* at Makkah from the Public Treasury

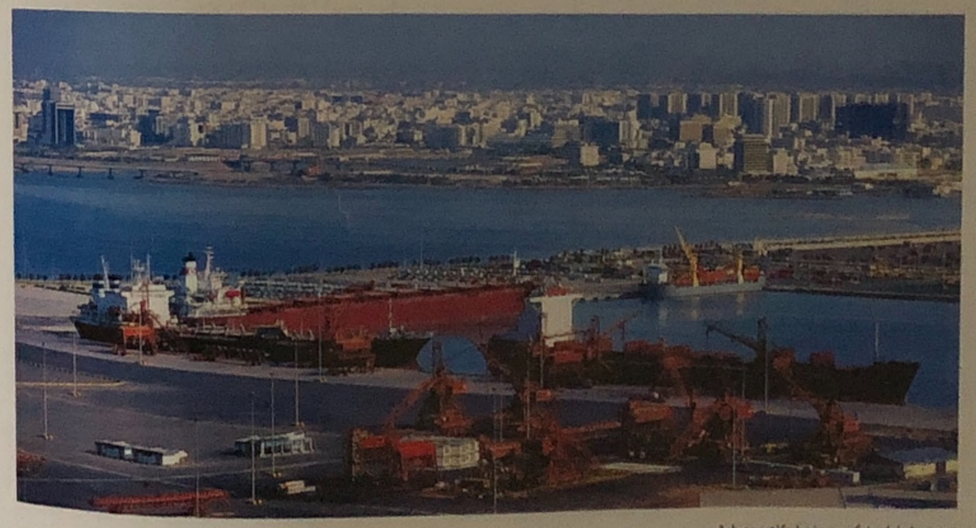
At the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the Ka'bah had nothing around it. There was only a narrow courtyard in which the people used to pray. The mosque remained in that state until the caliphate of Abu Bakr. At the time of Umar, the mosque was expanded. He bought the houses around the mosque and demolished them. He then joined the area into the sacred House of Allah. In addition to this, he built a low wall around it and fitted lamps to illuminate it. However, the mosque began to get too crowded with pilgrims who came to perform the obligatory duty of *Hajj*. Moreover, a large number of people embraced Islam after the conquests. Consequently, the mosque became too small a second time during the reign of Uthmân. He added some land to the Sacred House of Allah. He bought the land and surrounded it with a wall that was no taller than a man's height. The governors also built mosques in their provinces and spent on them from the provincial public treasury.

Spending on the Establishment of the First Navy

The public treasury played an important role in the establishment of the first navy in Islam at the time of Uthmân.

Spending on Moving the Port from Shu'aybah to Jeddah

In the year 26 AH/ 646 CE, the people of Makkah spoke to Uthmân about shifting the seaport from Shu'aybah. It was the old port of Makkah during the period of Ignorance or *Jahiliyyah*. Uthmân went out to Jeddah. He saw the location and commanded that the port be shifted to Jeddah.



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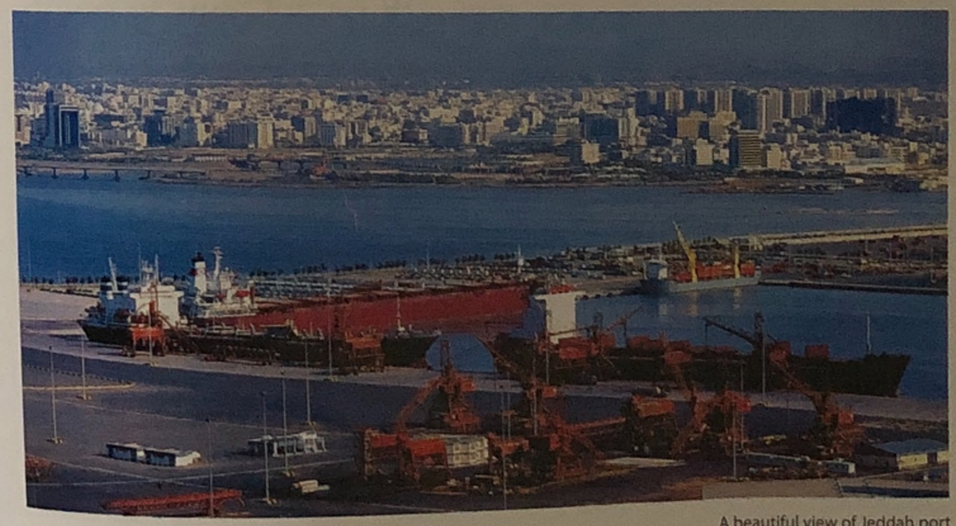

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Spending on *Muadhdhins* from the Public Treasury

Uthmân was the first one to give the *Muadhdhins* money from the public treasury. Uthmân paid them for giving the *Adhan* (call to prayer). Thus, the public treasury or *Bayt Al-Mâl* played a significant role in financing the noble aims of the Islamic state. In addition to expenditure on state administration and the interests of the people, money was spent on spreading Islam. The public treasury financed the establishment of the first navy of the Islamic state. The construction and renovation of mosques was done on a large scale, and salaries were paid to *Muadhdhins*, governors, judges, troops, and government agents and workers. Money was also spent on *Hajj* to the Sacred House of Allah, and the covering of the Ka'bah, which is the *Qiblah* of Islam and the Muslims. The public treasury of the Muslims also funded the digging of wells to provide drinking water for all citizens of the Islamic State. From the income of the state, such as *Zakât* and one-fifth of the war booty, the poor and needy, orphans, strangers and travellers were helped. The State treasury also spent money on setting the slaves free.

Uniting the *Ummah* or Muslim Community with a **Single *Mus-haf*:**

the Final Official Text of the Qur'ân; the Greatest Achievement of Uthmân: Stages in Writing down the Glorious Qur'ân.

The First Stage at the Time of the Prophet ﷺ

Allah's Messenger ﷺ commanded the writing down of the Qur'ân that was revealed to him. He had a number of scribes who wrote down the *Wahy* or Revelation. Zayd ibn Thabit gained the nickname of *Kâtib an-Nabi* or Scribe of the Prophet ﷺ, because he specialized in writing down the Revelation.

The Prophet ﷺ used to have the Qur'ân written down in Makkah, before the emigration or *Hijrah*. One of those who wrote was Abdullah ibn Sa'd ibn Abil Sarh.

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Another indication that the Qur'ân was written down in Makkah is the story of how Umar ibn al-Khattab became Muslim. When he entered upon his sister, she had a sheet in her hand on which *Sûrah TaHa* was written.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ died, the entire Qur'ân was written down. However, it was not put together in one place. It was written on palm leaves and flat stones. It was preserved in the hearts of men. Although it was preserved on sheets and in people's hearts, Jibril still reviewed the Qur'ân once every year. He reviewed it twice in the year in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ died. Allah's Messenger ﷺ did not compile the Qur'ân in a *Mus-haf,* because he was still expecting some Revelation might yet come. When the Revelation ended with his death, Allah guided the rightly guided Caliphs to do it.

The Second Stage at the Time of Abu Bakr

Among the Muslims who fell at Al-Yamamah were many of those who had memorized the Qur'ân. Hence, Abu Bakr, in consultation with Umar ibn Al-Khattab compiled the Qur'ân.

Abu Bakr gave this important mission to Zayd ibn Thabit Al-Ansari. He had been a scribe of the Revelation

during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ. He was a young man, being only twenty-one years old, and had the energy to do what was asked of him. He was highly truthful and trustworthy.

Zayd ibn Thabit collected the Qur'ân from palm-leaves, slabs of stone, from the memories of men, animal skins and scapulas (shoulder bones) upon which it had been preserved. The sheets were kept with Abu Bakr during his lifetime, until he died. It remained with Umar ibn Al-Khattab until his death, then with Hafsah, the daughter of Umar and wife of the Prophet ﷺ.

The difference between what was written at the time of the Prophet ﷺ and that which was written at the time of Abu Bakr

The difference is that the complete Qur'ân was written down at the time of the Prophet ﷺ, but was scattered on pages, flat stones, palm leaves, and other materials. The *Sûrahs* were not all collected together in one place. At the time of Abu Bakr, however, the Qur'ân was written on pages with every *Sûrah* having all its Verses put in order; pages that followed the order of the Verses as the people

had memorized them from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Therefore, the mission of Zayd ibn Thabit was to re-write what had already been written at the time of the Prophet ﷺ. Zayd put every *Sûrah* on a page with its Verses in the order in which they had been revealed. In short, Zayd collected the Qur'ân and put it in one volume. This copy was sewn with one thread.

The Third Stage in the Collection of the Qur'ân at the Time of Uthmân ibn Affan

The most important act during the Caliphate of Uthmân was the preparation of the official copy of the Qur'ân and its distribution to various parts of the Islamic state. Uthmân will be remembered eternally for this great achievement. It was a decisive milestone in uniting the Muslim nation.

During the rule of Uthmân, a report came from Armenia and Azerbaijan that Muslims had developed disagreements on the recitation of the Qur'ân. This report was brought to the Caliph by Hudhayfah ibn Al-Yaman, one of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ. Hudhayfah was alarmed by the differences he had seen in their pronunciations. This could have led the Muslims to great

confusion about the Book of Allah. Hudhayfah, therefore, spoke of his concern to the Caliph and asked him to save the Muslim *Ummah* before these differences among them went out control. He said, 'O Caliph, take this community in hand before they differ about their Book like the Christians and the Jews.'

Hudhayfah ibn Al-Yaman's warning to the Caliph, came in 25 AH/ 645 CE. That very year, Uthmân resolved to end these disputes. He sent Hafsah a message, stating, 'Send us the manuscript [*Suhûf*] so that we may make perfect copies and then return the manuscript to you.' Hafsah sent it to Uthmân, who ordered Zayd ibn Thabit, Abdullah ibn Az-Zubayr, Sa'd ibn Al-Âs and Abdur Rahman ibn Al-Harith ibn Hisham to make duplicate copies. He told the three Qurayshi men, 'Should you disagree with Zayd ibn Thabit on any point regarding the Qur'ân, write in the dialect of Quraysh as the Qur'ân was revealed in their tongue.' They did so, and when they had prepared several copies, Uthmân returned the *Suhûf* or manuscript to Hafsah. He then sent a copied *Mus-haf* to every region and ordered that all other Qur'ânic material, whether it was manuscripts or entire copies, be burnt.

Uthmân's main purpose was to remove all occasion for dispute in recitation. Therefore, with each official copy of the Qur'ân, he sent teachers to teach the people how to read it in accordance with the way it was written and

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in accordance with recitations that are narrated in sound reports.

The unique quality of the Glorious Qur'ân is that unlike other religious scriptures or books, it has only one version. The Muslim *Ummah* or nation all over the world follows the same Qur'ân.

Internal Disorder and Turmoil

History books usually tend to divide Uthmân's rule [644-656 CE] as caliph into six good years in the beginning and six troubled years in the end. The reign of Uthmân ibn Affan lasted twelve years. It is usual to say that in the first six years he was popular and in the last six the reverse was true. In other words, during his later years, the tide turned and mischief created by the enemies of Islam turned into full-fledged unrest. The storm of disorder burst upon the aged, pious Caliph and resulted in his martyrdom in the year 35 AH/ 656 CE.

The first half of Uthmân's caliphate was very peaceful. During this time, Muslims gained victories as we have described above, and the caliphate extended to a vast region of the then known world. However, the closing years of Uthmân's rule were marred by a terrible disorder

or turmoil, which ultimately led to the murder of Uthmân himself.

Uthmân ibn Affan was a very gentle and soft-hearted person. During the first six years of which the people did not criticize him for anything. In fact, he was more beloved to Quraysh than Umar ibn Al-Khattab. This was because Umar had been very strict with them.

Uthmân, on the other hand, was lenient and generous towards them. The Muslim historians call the events that happened in the second half of Uthmân's reign [30-35 AH] the *Fitnah* or turmoil, which ended in the martyrdom of Uthmân.

The Arabic word *Fitnah*, of which *Fitan* is the plural form, covers a wide range of meaning. The term *Fitnah* signifies the melting of gold and silver in fire in order to separate, or distinguish, the bad from the good. Thus, it comes to signify a trial, a temptation or a hardship by which a person is tried or tested. In the present context, it may come to mean the temptation that lures people into discord, unrest, conflict, and even civil war.

During the caliphates of Abu Bakr and Umar, and the first part of Uthmân's caliphate, the Muslims were united and there were no disputes among them. Then towards the end of Uthmân's rule some evildoers killed Uthmân,

and the events that followed left the Muslims divided.

Under Uthmân, new frontiers were opened up in North Africa through carefully planned expeditions. The rest of the Persian Empire also fell to Muslim control. Increased revenues began pouring into Iraq and Egypt, where these expeditions were launched, and ultimately into Madinah which was entitled to one-fifth of the shares. During the Caliphate of Uthmân the conquests spread east and west and the wealth started pouring into the public treasury or *Bayt Al-Mâl* from the spoils that were acquired. People's hands were filled with all kinds of good provisions. Prosperity had its effect on society and the result was that people became preoccupied with wealth. This was bound to become a cause of competition and hatred, especially among those whose faith was not strong enough to purify their hearts and who were not disciplined by piety, such as the desert Arabs. However, it is worth noting that the effects of the change began to appear first at the borders and edges of Caliphate, then they moved towards the capital. This led Uthmân to remind the Muslims in his sermons and speeches to be careful not to indulge in worldly matters.

Uthmân was well aware of the happenings in the Islamic state and once said in his letter to his commanders:

"The people are scattered far and wide. Selfishness is becoming widespread among them. I see three reasons for that: (1) Love of this world; (2) Whims and desires, and (3) Too many grudges. Soon it will lead to turmoil or unrest."

Uthmân was a very gentle and kind person. The people who wanted to create disorder among the Muslims took advantage of his soft and lenient nature. Umar was a strong character who was strict both with himself and with those who were under him. On the other hand, Uthmân was soft in nature and kinder in his dealings with others. He was not as strict with himself or others as Umar had been. Uthmân himself said, 'May Allah have mercy on Umar, who can do what Umar used to do?'

Uthmân's soft nature made the provincial governors bold, because of which unrest in the provincial capitals grew. It ultimately spread throughout the Islamic State. The enemies of Islam were in search of a suitable occasion to work against Islam and the Muslims. Soon they got the desired opportunity. They sent out their men to disturb the peace and to spread rumours.

Activity

1. The Public Treasury in Arabic is known as _____.
2. The income of the provinces consisted of _____, _____, and _____ on trade goods.
3. The greatest achievement of Uthmân was _____ _____.
4. The Prophet ﷺ did not compile the Qur'ân in a *Mus-haf* because _____.
5. The unique quality of the Qur'ân is that it has only one _____.
6. The second half of Uthmân's reign is known as the _____.

ACTIVITY

1. Why did Uthmân not take anything from the Public Treasury?
2. Make a list of the types of expenditure during Uthmân's time, and write briefly about each of them.
3. What was Hudhayfah ibn Al-Yaman's concern?
4. How did Uthmân ingeniously solve the Qur'ân recitation problem?
5. How do you know that Uthmân was aware of the growing *Fitnah*?

Conspiracy of Abdullah ibn Saba

Chapter 5

Conspiracy

of Abdullah ibn Saba

Abdullah ibn Saba, who was also known as Ibn As-Sawda, was a Jew. He was from Sanâ. He only appeared outwardly to have become Muslim at the time of Uthmân ibn Affan. He became noticeably active in Egypt, Iraq, and Syria in particular. He drew up plans and devised destructive ideas to divert the Muslims from their religion and stop them from obeying their caliph. In order to achieve this, he created divisions among them. He had a number of followers. They accepted Islam and pretended to be Muslims only to create disorder among the Muslims.

Abdullah ibn Saba invented quite a few 'beliefs' and began to preach them. He based his notions upon the love of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his family. He spread views and beliefs that he fabricated himself. It reflected his hateful nature. He introduced new things into Muslim

society to destroy its unity and stir up discord or *Fitnah*. He planted seeds of division among the people, which was one of several factors that led to the murder of the caliph Uthmân. Some of the beliefs invented by Abdullah ibn Saba were:

1. He said, 'It is strange that people believe that Isa would come back, but they do not accept that Muhammad ﷺ is coming back. And Muhammad ﷺ is more deserving of coming back than Isa.' Abdullah ibn Saba used to quote Verses of the Qur'ân, but he misinterpreted them according to his false claims.
2. He gave wrong commentaries on various Verses of the Glorious Qur'ân and twisted their meaning in favour of his belief.
3. He also falsely claimed that Ali ibn Abi Talib, who later became the fourth rightly guided Caliph, was the true heir [*Wasiy*] appointed by the Prophet ﷺ to succeed him. He used to say: 'There were one thousand Prophets, and each Prophet had a *Wasiy* or true heir and Ali was the heir to Muhammad ﷺ.'

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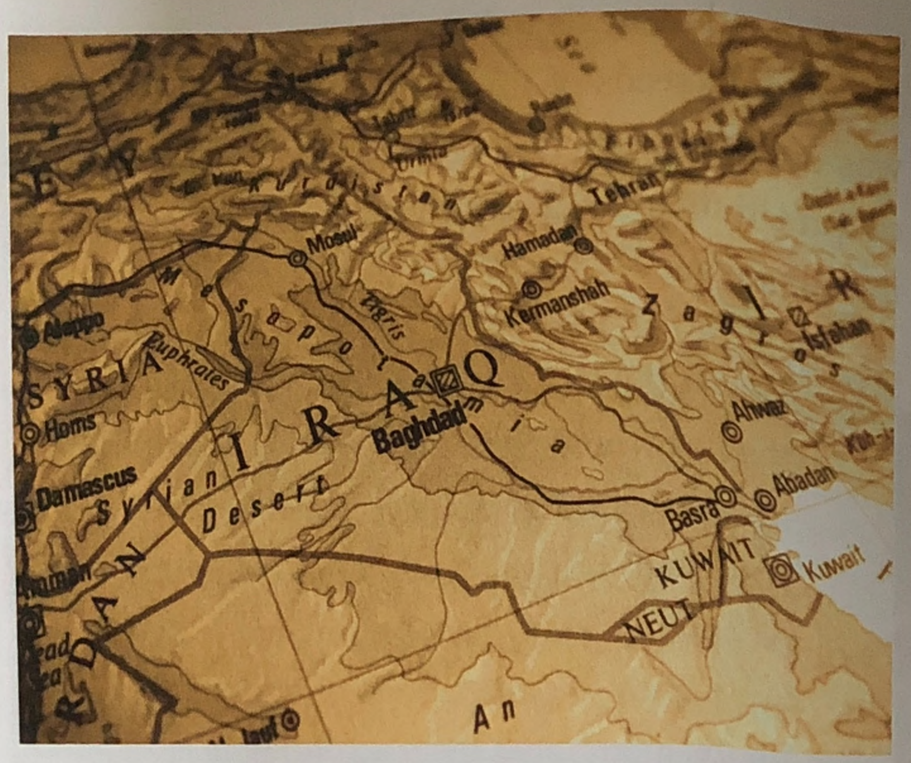

When this idea had settled in the hearts of his followers, he moved on to his final objective: making the people rise against the Caliph Uthmân. This fitted well with the whims and wishes of some people when he said to them: "Who does more wrong than the one who did not fulfil the final wishes of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ? Who pushed aside Ali, who was the true heir to the Messenger of Allah? Who took control of the nation wrongfully? It was Uthmân who took it unlawfully! Ali is the true heir of the Prophet ﷺ. Rise and do something about it. Start by criticizing your governors. Pretend that you are only commanding what is good and forbidding what is evil. In this way, people will

be attracted towards you, then call them to this matter."

He sent out his agents and wrote letters to people in the regions. They spread his views in secret. They also began to write to people in their regions, mentioning the faults of their governors. They even sent letters to Madinah and spread their false propaganda all over. Their objective was something other than what they appeared to be seeking. Abdullah ibn Saba's objective was to convince people that Ali had been wronged and that he had been deprived of his rights. He told people that Uthmân was a usurper, who had taken over a position of power wrongfully. Ibn Saba then tried to stir up the people, especially in Kufah, against their governors. He got the support of the Bedouins and those who had worldly ambitions. Ibn Saba began to spread rumours against Uthmân claiming that he favoured his relatives and spent money on them from the *Bayt al-Mâl* or public treasury. Uthmân realized that there were plots being hatched in some provinces and that the Muslim nation (*Ummah*) was facing bad times.

Ibn Saba eventually found his niche in Egypt. It was a comfortable place for him to propagate his ideas. He started organizing his campaigns against Uthmân. He urged the people to march to Madinah and rise against Uthmân on the pretext that Uthmân had become Caliph

unlawfully by snatching the Caliphate from Ali. He claimed that Ali was the true heir of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He deceived people by means of letters that he claimed to have received from senior Companions of the Prophet ﷺ. However, when the Bedouins came to Madinah, the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ denied having written any letters to Ibn Saba against Uthmân.

At the time, Abdullah ibn Sa'd ibn Abil Sarh was the governor of Egypt. He was busy in battles against the Roman forces in North Africa and therefore, could not pay much attention to Ibn Saba's activities.

Thus, Abdullah ibn Saba and the evildoers who gathered around him led to the formation of the Sabâi group. It formed one of the factors in the turmoil or *Fitnah,* which ended with the murder of Uthmân. It appears that the Sabâi plots were well organized. Ibn Saba and his followers were skilled in directing their workers and spreading their ideas. His followers, most of who were pretending to be Muslims, used various tricks to increase their strength. They made a great show of piety and posed as pious worshippers to influence the people. They were active in forming branches in Kufah, Basra, and Egypt.

Abdullah ibn Saba continued writing to the followers

in Kufah, Basra, and other places. He incited people to forge complaints against the governors, various officers and the caliph Uthmân ibn Affan as well. A new campaign against most of the officers was started by calling them irreligious, impractical and bad Muslims. They sent forged letters from place to place, which talked of unrest and injustice in the place from where they were sent. Such letters were usually dispatched to the followers of Ibn Saba. They read them out to as many people as possible. Thus, the people of various places began to believe that there was widespread unrest and that the prominent Companions wanted to remove the caliph.

The followers of Abdullah ibn Saba [the Sabâites] worked throughout the State against their governors. They were the real cause behind their removal from time to time. When Uthmân punished some official, they would accuse the caliph of punishing innocent Muslims. Thus, on one side they instigated the people against the governors and on the other hand they criticized and accused the Caliph. When Uthmân removed the governors based on the complaints against them, they accused him of being unduly kind to his relatives by giving them high positions.

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Uthmân's Line of Action in Dealing with the Turmoil or **Fitnah**

Uthmân confronted the turmoil in a number of ways. He chose a group of the Companions whose righteousness and sincerity no one could dispute. Each of them took a group of people with him. Uthmân sent them to the major provinces in order to find out what was going on. They went forth for the difficult, dangerous, and exhausting mission.

After a while, these inspectors returned to Madinah and presented their findings to the Caliph. They told him what they had seen, heard, and asked the people. All that they found was that the governors had been fair to the people and were taking care of them. Thus, it became clear that there was no reason for the Caliph to take any action against the governors. The people were fine. They were treated justly. They lived in an atmosphere of goodness, mercy, and security. The caliph himself was just. He shared out wealth fairly. He paid attention to the rights of Allah

and the rights of people. The rumours were no more than lies fabricated by those who bore grudges.

However, the rightly guided caliph did not stop there. Rather, he wrote a letter to the people of the provinces wherein he made a general announcement to the people. He wrote:

> 'I check on my governors and workers every time I meet them during *Hajj*. Since I was appointed Caliph, the nation has been encouraged to command what is good and forbid what is evil. There is no complaint made about me or any of my workers, except that I deal with it. My family and I have no rights before any of the people, but I will give them up to them. The people of Madinah complained to me that there were some people who were insulted and others were beaten. O you who were insulted in secret or beaten in secret, whoever has a claim of that nature, let him come to *Hajj* and take his rights wherever they are, from me or from my workers, or else forgive and Allah will reward those who forgive.'

When this letter was read out in the provinces, the people wept and prayed for Uthmân. They said, 'This nation is headed for trouble.'

Thus, Uthmân took several measures to deal with disorder. He sent trustworthy people to check on the people's condition. He wrote to the people of the provinces asking them to come to *Hajj* to present their complaints, if they had any, before all the pilgrims. He also sent word to the governors of the provinces themselves, commanding them to meet the people when they brought their complaints if there were any.

Meeting of the Governors

When the disquiet caused by the followers of Ibn Saba grew in all parts of the state, Uthmân sent for the governors of the provinces to come to Madinah at once after the *Hajj*. This occurred in the year 34 AH. Therefore, Abdullah ibn Aamir, Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan, and Abdullah ibn Sa'd arrived. The Caliph included in the consultation Sa'id ibn Al-Âs and Amr ibn Al-Âs, who were both former governors. All the governors attended the meeting. Uthmân inquired from them about the growing unrest in the State. His governors did not know of any complaints or grievances. Thus, outwardly everything was calm. Even the inspectors sent by the Caliph had returned without discovering anything wrong. No one had made any complaint to them.

However, Sa'id ibn Al-Âs pointed out that a plot was being hatched in secret. Rumours were being fabricated and spread among the people. Uthmân asked, 'What is the remedy for that?' It was suggested that the plotters should be arrested and the ringleaders put to death. However, Uthmân disliked the suggestion. He told the governors that without just cause he would not shed even a single drop of Muslim blood. The wheels of turmoil were already turning, but Uthmân was not prepared to deal with it by means of violence.

Thus, nothing was settled to avert the crisis. The governors departed as they came. When Mu'awiyah made ready to leave, he requested Uthmân to go with him to Syria, where loyal people would gather round him, but Uthmân refused. Then Mu'awiyah put up another suggestion. He said, 'Then let me send an army to stand by you.' Uthmân firmly rejected the suggestion. He said, 'I will never apply force on those who reside around the Prophet's home or place troops of armed men upon them.' 'In that case,' replied Mu'awiyah, 'O Commander of the Faithful, you will be assassinated or an army will come and invade Madinah.'

Uthmân ibn Affan replied, 'Allah is sufficient for me and He is the best disposer of affairs.' It was as if Uthmân knew that behind all the turmoil and rumours, there were evil people who were planning to achieve a terrible

objective. They wanted nothing less than overthrowing the Caliph and undermining the caliphate, but Uthmân held had made up his mind to go along with these people all the way. In this way, he would expose them in this world and in the Hereafter, leaving them with no excuse before Allah. This was a patient way of dealing with the situation on the part of the great and just ruler.

Activity

1. Who was Abdullah ibn Saba? What was his plan?
2. How did Ibn Saba use Ali ibn Abi Talib to instigate people against Uthmân?
3. Who were the members of the Sabâi group?
4. What two-fold approach did Uthmân take to deal with the *Fitnah*?
5. Why did Uthmân reject Mu'awiyah's suggestions?

Allegations

Raised by the Followers of Abdullah ibn Saba and Uthmân's Clarification

Chapter 6

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Allegations Raised by the Followers of Abdullah ibn Saba and Uthmân's Clarification

A meeting was held in the mosque where Uthmân called on the followers of Ibn Saba to explain what the confusion was about.

He asked them openly to make a list of the mistakes and wrongs they thought Uthmân had committed. Therefore, the rebels and the followers of Ibn Saba came forward and spoke out about the perceived wrongs and allegations according to them, to which Uthmân answered clearly and eloquently. He made his position very clear and defended all his actions. The Companions were convinced that Uthmân had done no wrong. To one of the allegations, Uthmân said, 'They say that I [Uthmân ibn Affan: the Caliph] love my family and I am generous to them. As for my love for my family, it did not make me favour them wrongfully. It has never

made me support them in injustice. It has never made me ill-treat others compared to them. Rather, they have duties like everyone else. I take their dues from them. As for giving to them, I gave to them from my own wealth. I have never given anything to them from the wealth of the Muslims. I do not consider the wealth of the Muslims permissible for them. No one has the right to take the wealth of the Muslim in a wrongful way. I used to give them generously from my personal wealth. Let the evildoers say what they say. I did not take any wealth or surplus from any province. I let those provinces keep their wealth. I did not bring anything to Madinah except the one-fifth [*Khums*] of the war spoils. It was the right of the public treasury. The Muslims took care to divide the remaining four-fifths and gave it to those who were rightfully entitled to it. By Allah, I did not take the booty or spoils. I eat from my own wealth. I give to my family and relatives from my personal wealth.'

Uthmân ibn Affan was also accused of setting aside a vast area of land for his camels to graze. To this allegation, Uthmân said, 'When I was appointed Caliph, I was one of the richest of the Muslims in camels and sheep, but I have spent it all. I have no livestock at all now except two

camels, and I have kept them for *Hajj*. Is this not so?' The Companions said, 'Yes, it is indeed.'

Thus, Uthmân answered the objections that had been raised against him. He clarified his position and disclosed the facts. The leaders of the conspirators who sat near the pulpit heard Uthmân's clarifications, but they were unmoved. The explanations made by Uthmân did not change their views. They were not interested in seeking guidance or setting things straight. His approach in this debate was that of a sincere and truthful man, but they were only looking for his faults. Their aim was to rouse people against the Caliph. Such people cannot be convinced or guided by any proof. Their objective was to plot against Islam and the Muslims.

On the other hand, the noble Companions and the righteous Muslims were moved by Uthmân's words. They believed what he said and his words increased their love for him.

The leading Companions suggested to the Caliph that he should kill those troublemakers and rid the Muslims of their evil. This would bring stability and peace by putting an end to the evil stirred up by them and their followers. However, Uthmân thought otherwise. He took no steps

against the evildoers. He took no step against Abdullah ibn Saba and his adherents who had come to Madinah from Kufah, Basra, and Egypt. He knew what they were plotting. Even so, he let them leave Madinah and allowed them to go back to their own lands.

Uthmân's Response to Some of their Requests

Uthmân responded to some of their requests by dismissing certain governors and appointing those they asked for. These steps could have been enough to deal with the situation. It could have been sufficient to ensure truth and justice, if the situation had been simple. However, there were hidden aims and bitter hatred behind those complaints. The objective was to create turmoil, divide the Muslims and break their unity. Matters headed towards what the Prophet ﷺ had foretold: the martyrdom of Uthmân ibn Affan.

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A Look at the Course of Action Adopted by Uthmân in Dealing with the Turmoil

Uthmân adopted a wise and noble course of action in dealing with the turmoil faced by him. The course of action adopted by him is very instructive and useful in confronting turmoil at all times and places.

Verification: To Confirm that something is True and Accurate

Uthmân sent inspection committees to the provinces to listen to the people. He managed to delve into the activities of Abdullah ibn Saba and his adherents to find out what they were really up to. He did not make haste in passing judgements.

Sticking to Justice and Fairness

He sent a letter to various provinces in which he asked anyone who claimed to have been beaten or insulted by the governors to come to *Hajj* and settle his score with the Caliph or any of the governors.

Patience

Uthmân ibn Affan displayed rare patience in dealing with the situation facing him.

Keenness for what Unites People and Avoiding what Causes Division among the Muslims

Uthmân appointed a committee headed by Zayd ibn Thabit in order to compile a final official text of the Qur'ân. Uthmân is remembered for this achievement. The Uthmânic Codex [*Al-Mus'haf Al-Uthmâni*] proved to be a decisive milestone in the consolidation of the Muslim nation on a single version of the Noble Qur'ân.

Keeping Quiet and Not Speaking too much

Uthmân was a person who did not speak too much and he was very quiet as a matter of habit.

Consulting the Knowledgeable People

Uthmân consulted the scholars among the Companions. The scholars are the key to security. They are a refuge in times of calamity and tribulation. The one who turns to them will find sound understanding and the proper Islamic course of action in dealing with matters.

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The Rebels'

Occupation of Madinah

The rebels hatched their final plot to attack Uthmân ibn Affan in Madinah. They finally decided among themselves to force him to give up the Caliphate or be killed. A secret plan of action was drawn up and the plot rapidly came to a head. The rebels decided to come to Madinah from their three centres: Egypt, Kufa, and Basra, at the time of *Hajj*. They would leave their provinces under the pretext of performing *Hajj*. They would present themselves as pilgrims and tell others that they were going for *Hajj*. When they reached Madinah, they let the other real pilgrims go on to Makkah to perform the *Haj* jrites. Most of the people of Madinah had also left for *Hajj*. The rebels besieged Uthmân with the objective of removing him from the Caliphate or killing him. They gathered on the outskirts of Madinah, in the month of Shawwal in the year 35 AH/ 655 CE.

The rebels came from Egypt in four groups, each of which had a leader. These four leaders in turn had another

leader, besides their evil ringleader Abdullah ibn Saba. The four groups totalled one thousand men in all. The rebels from Kufah and Basra also numbered one thousand men in four groups from each place.

Abdullah ibn Saba travelled with these people and felt satisfied and proud at the success of his evil plan. The rebels from Egypt wanted Ali ibn Abi Talib as Caliph, while those from Kufah wanted Az-Zubayr ibn Al-Awwam as Caliph, whereas those from Basra wanted Talhah ibn Ubaydullah as Caliph. The aim was to create division among the Companions of the Prophet and confuse the people, but Allah protected them from this evil. The rebels arrived outside Madinah on a Wednesday in the month of Dhul Qa'dah in the year 35 AH.

The first to arrive were the Egyptians. News of their approach reached Uthmân before they arrived, when he was in a village outside Madinah. He sent Ali ibn Abi Talib to negotiate with the rebels from the provinces.

The people stayed in a place called Dhul' Marwah for about a month and a half before the Caliph's murder, where Ali met with them. Uthmân made a deal with each group on its own, and then each party set off for its own land.

Fabricated Letter

to Kill the Egyptian Delegation

After the completion of negotiations, the people of the different regions started heading to their homes. They felt content with what they had achieved. It became clear to the troublemakers and evildoers that their plans had failed. Therefore, they came up with a new plot to revive the turmoil and destroy all the deals that had been made between the people and Uthmân. The conspiracy took the following form: As the Egyptian delegation was travelling homeward; they saw someone riding a camel. He repeatedly approached them, and then moved away. It appeared as if he was fleeing from them and saying, 'Come and catch me.'

So they caught him and asked him, 'What is the matter with you?' He said, 'I am the messenger of the Caliph to his agent in Egypt.' They searched him and found a letter that bore Uthmân's seal. The letter was addressed

to his governor. When they opened it, they found that it contained orders to hang or kill the rebels or cut off their hands and feet.

The Egyptians returned to Madinah to demand an explanation, but Uthmân denied having ever written such a letter. The letter bore Uthmân's seal but it was a forgery. Uthmân told them: 'There are two ways you can prove me guilty: either you bring two Muslim men to testify or accept my oath by Allah. There is no deity worthy of worship besides Allah. I declare on oath that I did not write it, nor did I dictate, nor do I have any knowledge of it. It is easy to accuse someone of having written a letter, and likewise, it is easy to put a seal on it.' But they did not believe him.

The hateful rebels insisted that the letter was from Uthmân since it bore his seal and was carried by his slave on one of the *Zakât* [alms] camels. The letter was addressed to his governor Abdullah Sa'd ibn Abil Sarh, ordering him to kill the rebels. However, in fact, it was a forged letter that was falsely attributed to Uthmân.

It is significant to realize that this cursed letter was not the first letter forged by the rebels. Previously, they had fabricated letters that they claimed were written by the Mothers of the Believers and prominent Companions like Ali, Talhah, and Az-Zubayr.

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The Beginning of the **Siege**

Negotiations and debates were held with the rebels for several weeks, with the Caliph practically under siege in his house. Before the siege got worse, Uthmân was able to go out to perform the obligatory Prayers and admit whomever he wanted into his house.

Then he was prevented from leaving the house even for the obligatory Prayers. The rebels demanded Uthmân leave the Caliphate. During the last few days, the rebels even stopped the supply of water. Uthmân sent a message to Ali to tell him: 'They are withholding water from us; if you can, send some of your surplus water.'

He also sent word to Talhah, Az-Zubayr, Ai'shah and the other wives of the Prophet. The first one to come to his aid was Ali and Umm Habibah, Mother of the Believers. Touched with pity, she sought to carry water on her mule through the rebel ranks but the besiegers treated her roughly. She was a woman, the Mother of the Believers and the wife of the Prophet ﷺ, but nothing availed to stop her from being treated roughly. The rebels struck out at her with their

swords, and cut the bridle of her mule. It started running away with Umm Habibah. The people tried to stop it, and its saddle tilted. They grabbed hold of it, and stopped the mule, but she almost fell to the ground and was nearly killed. The better part of the inhabitants of Madinah was shocked at the violence and beastliness of the rebels. None had the courage to stop them. Sick at heart, most kept to their houses.

Negotiations between Uthmân and the Besiegers

The crisis carried on as the rebels surrounded Uthmân's house and besieged him. They asked him to give up the caliphate or threatened to kill him. However, Uthmân refused to leave it. He said, 'I will never take off the garment [i.e., the Caliphate] that Allah has given me to wear.' Allah's Messenger, during his lifetime, had advised Uthmân not to take off the garment that Allah would give him to wear. However, some of the Companions had a different opinion about the matter. Al-Mûghirah ibn Al-Akhnas suggested to him that he should give up the Caliphate to save his life. Nevertheless, Uthmân stuck to the advice of the Messenger of Allah and refused to give up the post.

Abdullah ibn Umar, on the contrary, urged Uthmân not to give up the caliphate. Abdullah ibn Umar asked, 'If you give it up, are you going to live forever?' Uthmân

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Then he was prevented from leaving the house even for the obligatory Prayers. The rebels demanded Uthmân leave the Caliphate. During the last few days, the rebels even stopped the supply of water. Uthmân sent a message to Ali to tell him: 'They are withholding water from us; if you can, send some of your surplus water.'

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swords, and cut the bridle of her mule. It started running away with Umm Habibah. The people tried to stop it, and its saddle tilted. They grabbed hold of it, and stopped the mule, but she almost fell to the ground and was nearly killed. The better part of the inhabitants of Madinah was shocked at the violence and beastliness of the rebels. None had the courage to stop them. Sick at heart, most kept to their houses.

Negotiations between Uthmân and the Besiegers

The crisis carried on as the rebels surrounded Uthmân's house and besieged him. They asked him to give up the caliphate or threatened to kill him. However, Uthmân refused to leave it. He said, 'I will never take off the garment [i.e., the Caliphate] that Allah has given me to wear.' Allah's Messenger, during his lifetime, had advised Uthmân not to take off the garment that Allah would give him to wear. However, some of the Companions had a different opinion about the matter. Al-Mûghirah ibn Al-Akhnas suggested to him that he should give up the Caliphate to save his life. Nevertheless, Uthmân stuck to the advice of the Messenger of Allah and refused to give up the post.

Abdullah ibn Umar, on the contrary, urged Uthmân not to give up the caliphate. Abdullah ibn Umar asked, 'If you give it up, are you going to live forever?' Uthmân

answered, 'No.' Abdullah continued, 'If you do not give it up, can they do any more than kill you?' Uthmân replied, 'No.' Abdullah asked, 'Are they the ones to decide whether you go to Paradise or Hell?' He said, 'No.' Abdullah concluded, 'I do not think that you should take off the garment that Allah gave you to wear. Otherwise, it will set an example and every time a people dislike their Caliph or ruler they will kill him.'

Abdullah's was a far-sighted advice. He did not want Uthmân to set a bad example for the caliphs who came after him. Uthmân, however, was far above doing such a thing. Had Uthmân surrendered to the demands of these Sabâi [the followers of Abdullah ibn Saba] rebels, the caliphate would have become a plaything in the hands of the evildoers. Thus, the position of the caliph would have become unstable and would have commanded no respect among the people. Uthmân set a good example for those who came after him. He consulted Abdullah ibn Umar and other Companions and bore the siege with patience. He sought reward from Allah and did not give up the Caliphate. Nor did he cause the blood of the Muslims to be shed. This was the reason why he decided not to resist or fight back. He wanted to avoid negative consequences. He hoped to sacrifice his life for the sake of Allah, and do what was in the best interests of the nation or *Ummah*. In fact, he acted faithfully on the advice of the Prophet ﷺ.

Activity

ACTIVITY

1. The leading Companions suggested to the Caliph that he should _____ the followers of Ibn Saba.
2. Uthmân yielded to the Sabâites' requests by _____ some of the governors.
3. The rebels came from their three centres: _____, _____, and _____.

1. Mention any two allegations that the Sabâites had against Uthmân.
2. Did Uthmân's clarifications convince the followers of Ibn Saba? Why?
3. Make a list of the course of actions that Uthmân took in dealing with the turmoil?
4. How did Uthmân deal with the rebels who had come out to occupy Madinah?
5. How can you say that the letter had been forged?
6. What type of siege did the rebels lay on Uthmân?
7. Uthmân did not give up his caliphate. What long-term consequences did it have?

The Rebels Threaten to Kill Him

Chapter 7

The Rebels Threaten to

Kill Him

One day, Uthmân went to the entrance of the house in which he was besieged and heard the rebels threatening to kill him. He moved away from the entrance and entered upon those who were with him inside the house. They said to him: 'Allah will suffice you.'

Uthmân wondered why they would want to kill him. He had heard the Prophet ﷺ say: 'It is not permissible to shed the blood of a Muslim except in three cases: a man who disbelieves after having believed, or who commits adultery after having been married, or who kills someone unlawfully.'

"By Allah, I have never committed adultery in my life. I never wished to change my religion after Allah guided me, and I have never killed anyone. So why would they kill me?' said Uthmân.

Uthmân tried to calm the rebels down and put an end to stop their rebellion by asking the besiegers to send him

a man to speak to him. They sent a young man called Sa'sa'ah ibn Sawhân. Uthmân asked him to explain to him what they were angry about, but talking with Sa'sa'ah bore no fruit. Uthmân realized that the rebels were bent upon killing him. He warned them against that and against the consequences thereof.

Several prominent Companions of the Prophet including Ali ibn Abi Talib, who succeeded Uthmân, offered to provide protection to Uthmân; but he rejected their offers.

There were seven hundred men with Uthmân at his residence. If he had allowed them and if Allah had willed, they would have driven the rebels out of the city. However, Uthmân told them not to resist or fight.

The Emigrants [*Muhâjirîn*] and the Helpers [*Al-Ansâr*] stood by him. When some of the Companions saw that Uthmân insisted on refusing to fight the rebels and that they were bent upon killing him, they could find no other way to protect him. They offered to help him leave and go to Makkah to save himself from the rebels, but Uthmân refused such offers.

Why did Uthmân resolve not to Resist or Fight?

Researchers and historians have found five probable reasons for Uthmân asking the Companions not to fight. They are:

1. Uthmân ibn Affan had promised the Prophet ﷺ that he would bear the turmoil with patience, after the Prophet ﷺ informed him that a turmoil would befall him.
2. He did not want to become the first of the successors of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to shed the blood of Muslims.
3. He knew that the rebels were not after anyone else; they were against Uthmân. Hence, he did not want to use the believers as a shield to protect to protect himself. Rather, he wanted to be a shield to protect them.
4. He knew that he would be killed when adhering patiently to the truth. The Prophet ﷺ had given him the glad tidings of Paradise for a calamity that would befall him.
5. He resolved to refrain from fighting or resisting,

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because that would give him a stronger position against them on the Day of Rising. Ultimately, the Prophet's prophecy that Uthmân would be martyred was fulfilled.

Uthmân was calm and rational, and thus, was able to take the right decisions. Several reasons came together to make him take a peaceful position with regard to fighting those who rebelled against him. The Prophet ﷺ had mentioned to him the turmoil and had foretold that Uthmân and the Companions would be in the right. He knew of the rebels' intention to kill him.

The Muslims came to defend him and advised him to fight them, but he told people to refrain from fighting. The patience that Uthmân showed until he was martyred is among the greatest of his virtues in the sight of the Muslims.

Did Uthmân ask the Governors to defend him?

No, he did not. He dealt with the turmoil erring on the side of caution and he refrained from taking action. On the contrary, he turned away senior Companions and their sons who wanted to defend him. He even emphatically forbade his slaves and servants to fight.

Nevertheless, some of the Companions did rush to defend him on their own, without being asked to do so. In spite of his many attempts to turn them away, several large groups of Muslim soldiers in the other regions hastened to defend the caliph on their own or on the instructions of their commanders.

The Martyrdom of Uthmân

The days of *Hajj* came to an end. Scores of pilgrims were now advancing toward Madinah. Abdullah ibn Abbas, Ai'shah and many others were coming to defend Uthmân. News reached the rebels that the pilgrims wanted to come to support the caliph. They knew that the people of the region hated them. They felt that nothing could save them and the only way out was to kill the Caliph.

The Last Day of the Siege and Uthmân's Dream

On the last day of the siege, that is, on the day he was killed, Uthmân fell asleep.

That morning he told the people, 'I saw the Prophet ﷺ in my dream. Abu Bakr and Umar were with him. The Prophet ﷺ said to me: "O Uthmân! Break your fast with us."' Uthmân was fasting on the day that he was killed.

How Uthmân Was **Killed**

The rebels attacked Uthmân's house and were confronted by the young sons of some prominent Companions of the Prophet ﷺ. Fighting broke out, but Uthmân said, 'I do not want you to defend me.'

The rebels wanted to burn down the door, but the people of the house leapt up to stop them. At that moment, Uthmân was praying. Soon Uthmân persuaded the defenders to leave the house. He asked them to leave him alone with the rebels. Consequently, no one was left in the house except Uthmân and his family.

Uthmân placed the copy of the Qur'ân before him and began to read from it. Then one of the besiegers entered upon him. Uthmân saw him. He said to him, 'Between you and me, there is the Book of Allah.' So the man went out and left Uthmân alone. However, no sooner had he left than another man came forth. He was called Mawt al-Aswad or 'the Black Death'. He strangled Uthmân and then struck him with his sword. Uthmân tried to protect

himself with his hand, but he cut it off. The blood flowed forth upon the copy of the Qur'ân, which lay before him.

When the rebels surrounded him, his wife Nailah tried to defend and shield her husband. She received several blows of the sword on her hands. One of the rebels advanced towards her, struck her fingers and cut them off. The fingers fell upon the ground. One of Uthmân's slaves attempted his defence. He slew one of the rebels, but was immediately cut down. Further effort was in vain. The rebels plunged their weapons into the Caliph's body, and he fell lifeless on to the ground. The mob now had their way. A riotous scene followed, during which the house was gutted. Nailah, wounded and bleeding, was stripped of her veil. Just then, the cry was raised: 'To the Public Treasury!'

The rebels ransacked the house and everything in it. They even took the jewellery that the women were wearing. They raided the Public Treasury or *Bayt al-Mâl,* but they found nothing in it, except two food

The Date of his Murder

Uthmân ibn Affan was martyred on the 18th of Dhul Hijjah in the year 35 AH [July 17, 656 CE]. It was a Friday. He was eighty-two years old when he died.

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The righteous people of Madinah were grieved on the murder of their Caliph. The rebel Sabâi troops occupied Madinah and Abdullah ibn Saba, the maker of this devilish plan, rejoiced at the success of his evil objectives.

His Funeral and Burial

A number of the Prophet's Companions washed Uthmân and shrouded him. Az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam offered the funeral Prayer for Uthmân and buried him. He was buried at night, between *Maghrib* [sunset Prayer] and *Isha* [the Prayer offered after nightfall].

The Effect of Uthmân's Murder on the Muslim *Ummah* or Nation

Uthmân's murder was the cause of a great deal of further turmoil among the Muslim nation. It casts its shadow on the events that followed it. People's hearts changed. Lying became widespread. Turning away from the law and the teachings of Islam began from that point. The murder of Uthmân was one of the greatest causes of turmoil among people. It created divisions in the nation that have remained until today. Hatred was created again among the people. There were many calamities during which the evildoers prevailed and the righteous were humiliated.

The blood of Uthmân that flowed forth upon the copy of the Qur'ân he was reading from is still on it. It has not been erased. A sage called Muhammad ibn Sirin says, 'I was doing my rounds of the Ka'bah. I heard a man saying, "O Allah, forgive me, but I do not think You would forgive me." I said, "O man! I have never heard anyone saying what you are saying." He answered: "I promised Allah that if I could slap Uthmân on the face, I would surely do so. But he was killed. His body was placed on the bier

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in the house. People poured in to pay their last respects. I entered as if I also wanted to pay my last respects, and I found myself alone in the place. I lifted the cloth from his face. I slapped him and I covered him again. Now my right hand is paralyzed."' Muhammad ibn Sirin, the narrator of this incident, remarks, 'I saw his hand. It was like a piece of wood.'

The Muslim Sorrow at the Loss of Uthmân

The calamity of the death of Uthmân had a great impact on the believers. They were overwhelmed by grief. He died at the age of eighty-two, after a reign of twelve years. The misfortunes amid which he sank bring out the evil created by Abdullah ibn Saba that any further description of his evil is hardly needed.

Activity

ACTIVITY

1. There were _____ people in the house with Uthmân.
2. _____ had foretold that Uthmân and the Companions would be in the right.
3. The caliph Uthmân died after a reign of _____ years.

1. What, according to the Prophet ﷺ, were the conditions under which Muslims can be killed?
2. Why did Uthmân refuse to resist the rebels?
3. What is the greatest of Uthmân's virtues in the sight of the Muslims?
4. What finally induced the rebels to kill the Caliph?
5. Who was 'Black Death'?
6. What was the effect of Uthmân's murder on the Muslim *Ummah*?

1. 'O Uthmân! Break your fast with us.'
2. 'Between you and me, there is the Book of Allah.'

Uthmân ibn Affan

(باللغة الإنجليزية)

Our past, present, and future are interconnected and interdependent. Therefore, knowing and understanding our history is not optional; it is essential.

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